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LETTERS

FROM

SNOWDON:

DESCRIPTIVE OF A

TOUR

THROUGH THE

NORTHERN COUNTIES of WALES.

CONTAINING THE

ANTIQUITIES, HISTORY,

AND

STATE OF THE COUNTRY:

WITH THE

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS

OF THE

INHABITANTS.

—— Toto divisos orbe Britannos.

LONDON,

Printed for J. RIDLEY, in St. James's-Street; and
W. HARRIS, No 70, St. Paul's Church-Yard.

M DCC LXX.

PREFACE.

LETTER FROM A FRIEND TO THE AUTHOR.

SIR,

AS you desire my opinion of your Letters from Snowdon, which you intend to publish, it is a duty I owe to friendship to give it with freedom and impartiality. Without descending to a minute criticism on particular passages, I shall observe in general upon the substance of the work, and the manner in which it is written.

In describing the manners and customs of the inhabitants, you represent them as a strange compound of virtue and vice. You

deſcribe the country as uncultivated, and the inhabitants in an inferior degree of civilization than the Engliſh. However juſt your obſervations and deſcription may be, yet the people of that country at leaſt will think, that the picture is not a true repreſentation of them. It will be well if you do not meet with a Fluellin, who will oblige you to undergo the puniſhment inflicted on ancient Piſtol, by eating the leek, and you may be compelled as ignominiouſly to ſay,

Quiet thy cudgel, thou doſt ſee I eat it.

The aſperity with which you have, in ſome places, treated the country, is not the only reprehenſible part of your letters. Your work contains ſome moral reflections, contrary to the received opinions of mankind. Add to theſe objections, that your letters are written with ſo much negligence, inequality, and inaccuracy of ſtile, that you muſt expect the abuſe of malevolence, and the ſcourge of criticiſm.

If

If you had ſtudied to pleaſe the taſte of the public, your work ought to have abounded, in imitation of the modern compoſitions, with antitheſes, abrupt tranſitions, and what the faſhionable writers and readers call Sentiment. However difficult it may be to explain what is meant by the word Sentiment; yet is it eſteemed the criterion of merit by which every modern publication is judged. Sermons, plays, poetry, hiſtory, muſt all have enough of this ingredient to pleaſe the public. It is the faſhionable Sal Atticum, which renders the compoſition palatable.

As you have deſired my opinion, you muſt excuſe the freedom with which I give it. And I ſincerely wiſh the public judgment may prove more favorable than that of

Your friend and ſervant, &c.

PREFACE.

ANSWER TO THE FOREGOING LETTER.

SIR,

WHEN an author can bear with patience to hear his writings cenſured, he gains a victory over his vanity. My obligations are due to you even for the ſevere cenſure your letter contains, as it will prepare me for the public opinion, unfavorable as it may prove. You will allow me however to ſay ſomething in vindication of what you have treated with ſo much ſeverity.

I did not ſit down to draw a caricature, nor to decorate the object with beauties which it had not. However deformed a portrait may be, if it is like the perſon for whom it was intended, the painter is juſtified. In delineating the manners and cuſtoms of the country, their virtues are painted as well as vices; and in neither is there a deviation from truth.

truth. In whatever they have merited praiſe, I have gladly ſeized the opportunity of doing them juſtice; and, whenever it has fallen within my province to cenſure, it is done with decency and candor.

Your obſervations on my language and ſtile, may perhaps be better founded; I freely own that they are not written with labored accuracy. I have ſtudied neither ſentiment nor wit. Claſſical purity conſiſts in eaſe and perſpicuity; not in labored ſentences, and an affected rotundity of period, which ſeems to be the preſent faſhionable mode of writing. A modern reader would not heſitate to prefer the ſtile and manner of Seneca, to the pureſt writer in the Auguſtan age.

Some of theſe letters are upon ſubjects of importance to the principality of Wales; and have been written with a view to engage the attention of ſuch as are concerned. The reſt of theſe epiſtolary obſervations were written to friends for amuſement only; and their publication may be leſs owing to the author's vanity, than their requeſt.

Secure

PREFACE.

Secure of candor, if not indulgence, no apology ſhall be made for their publication. Though an entertainment cannot be provided agreeable to every taſte, yet I ſhall continue to hope, that moſt readers will find ſome gratification for their amuſement or curioſity in the peruſal of theſe letters.

I am, Sir, &c.

CON-

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LETTERS

LETTERS

FROM

SNOWDON.

LETTER I.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE no reaſon to regret the length of my journey. It has been embelliſhed with ſuch an infinite diverſity of objects, ſo enchanting to one whoſe proſpects have been confined to the unvariegated ſcenes of nature. Unattended and unadorned by her handmaid art, ſhe appears without deceit in all her native charms. Sometimes in the gay

attire of fertile vales and woods, or in the plainer dreſs of mountains, cataracts and craggy precipices; more beautiful by change, and more pleaſing by variety.

Since I have left the buſy ſcenes of life, I have now the firſt opportunity of ſending you the promiſed account of my tour into this country. I will omit no circumſtance that fell within my obſervation, which I ſhall think may prove either curious or entertaining.

In a journey of three days from the metropolis, I arrived at Cheſter, on the banks of the river Dee. The caſtle, which ſeems to have been curious neither for elegance or ſtrength, is in a ruinous condition. The walls of the town are in good repair. There is a pleaſant walk upon them, from whence we have an extenſive circular proſpect. Here we had a diſtant view of the Welſh mountains, thoſe natural fortreſſes which ſo long ſecured the independence of the inhabitants. Theſe made a formidable appearance to one who intended ſo ſoon to

ſcale

ſcale their craggy ſummits. The proſpect we had from hence was a perfect contraſt. On one ſide, the beautiful vales of Cheſhire, clad in all the blooming verdure of ſpring; on the other, the Cambrian hills ſtill wearing the hoary garb of winter.

Cheſter was anciently the reſidence of the kings of Wales. Its ſituation on the frontiers of England and Wales was moſt convenient to repel the incurſions of the Saxons. In the ancient Britiſh language it is called CAER *, which ſignifies a walled or fortified place; from whence, or the Latin word Caſtrum, its preſumed, the preſent name is derived. Long after the Britons, or Welſh, were diſpoſſeſſed of England, by the Saxons, they ſtill retained great part of the level country, on the borders of Wales, which was part of Mercia, afterwards called the marches of Wales.

* All the derivations of the Welſh words, which the reader will find in the following pages, are inſerted upon the authority of a gentleman converſant in the language.

The marches of Wales comprehended the greateſt part of the counties of Cheſter, Salop, Hereford, and Worceſter. They were claimed both by the Saxons and the Britons; and poſſeſſed by either, as the fortune of war prevailed. They were the ſcenes of continual wars and devaſtation. It was the wiſe policy of the times to give large eſtates to men of diſtinguiſhed valour, to preſerve the frontier counties from rapine and violence, who were called lords-marchers. They had great numbers of men under their command, who ſwore fealty to them, and were under their direction upon all occaſions. Their power was ſo great, that they might rather be conſidered as petty princes than ſubjects.

Egbert*, who reduced the Saxton heptarchy, took Cheſter from the princes of Wales. Since which time it has always been accounted as part of England. In the time of king Offa, the Welſh loſt the greateſt part of the marches. With a view either to prevent

* It is ſaid of Egbert, that he was rowed on the river Dee by nine kings.

their

their incurſions, into their frontier counties, or to mark the boundaries, he made a great dyke, called Offa's dyke (in the Britiſh language CLAUDH Offa) which is remaining in many places at this time. This was built probably with the ſame intent as the great wall between England and Scotland, and that between China and Tartary. Offa's dyke extends from the river Dee at Cheſter to the Wye at Chepſtow. Its direction gives us reaſon to think it was intended to confine the Welſh to the mountains, as its general courſe runs on the ſides of the hills.

The character of the inhabitants of North Wales, the Ordovices of the Romans, was even by the teſtimony of their enemies, that of a brave and warlike people. They preſerved their independence for centuries, againſt the continued attempts of a great and powerful people to ſubdue them. Whether this may with greater propriety be attributed to their natural bravery, to the ſituation of their country, or to their want of

ſuch things as tempt the ambition of conquerors, I ſhall leave undecided. Certain however, it is, that the Saxons continually made the greateſt efforts to conquer them. Inſtigated, perhaps, more by a principle of revenge, for the ravages they committed on the borders of England, than by any advantages they could derive from the conqueſt of ſuch a country.

Be this as it may, they were in an almoſt uninterrupted ſtate of war. Such an innate principle of enmity and antipathy ſubſiſted between the two nations, that the cruelties perpetrated by either ſide (as the chance of war decided) equalled thoſe of the moſt ſavage nations. This enmity is traditional, and the common people in a great degree retain it inveterate to this day. Whenever they ſpeak of an Engliſhman, whom they ſtill call Saes or Saxon, they always join ſome opprobious epithet.

It is not certain at what time the Britons were firſt called by the name of Welſh, nor from

from whence the word has its derivation. Some hiſtorians ſay that Wallia * comes from Italia, as the Britons were deſcendants of Eneas. Others that Welſh come from Gauliſh, as they were deſcended from the Gauls. Nothing is more uncertain than etymological learning, eſpecially if we have no other foundation than ſimilarity of ſound. It is the diſgrace of ſcience. I ſhall not riſk even a conjecture upon the ſubject. From whatever origin the word Welſh may be derived, it is not unreaſonable to ſuppoſe it to be a term of reproach, fixed on them by the Saxons, as they never call themſelves by that name, but always Cymry. Some likewiſe are weak enough to derive the word Cymry from Cimbri, imagining that they originally

* Wales (Wallia) cometh of the Saxon WEALH, which ſignifies peregrinus, for the Saxons ſo called them, for in troth they were ſtrangers to them, being the remains of the old and ancient Britons, a wiſe and warlike nation inhabiting the weſt of England. Vide Lambert. This derivation ſeems not improbable, and it may be remarked in confirmation of it, that WEALT ſignifies in the Welſh, barbarous or wild.

deſcended from that people. All theſe derivations I look upon as vague and groundleſs conjectures. I chuſe to avoid adopting any ſuch; for in my opinion the names of different nations are generally more owing to caſual events, than they are deſcriptive of either their deſcent or country.

In a future letter I propoſe ſending you ſome hiſtorical account of this people.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER II.

YOU may with juſtice, my dear friend, complain of my laſt letter. It contained obſervations on ſubjects unimportant and unentertaining to the greateſt number of readers. Have patience, Sir, a reader muſt ſometimes, like a traveller, put up with bad as well as good accommodations; if the landlord does his endeavor to pleaſe, his gueſt ought to be ſatisfied. If the firſt ſtage is but indifferent, he muſt purſue his journey patiently, in hopes of better entertainment at the next.

At Cheſter we provided ourſelves with the neceſſary equipment of a Welſh poney; and procured a guide, who likewiſe ſerved us in the

the capacity of an interpreter. We ſet out from Cheſter ruminating on our intended tour, and forming in our imaginations as many dangers and difficulties, as Hannibal met with in croſſing the Alps. We were however agreeably deceived in our firſt day's journey, for we had an extraordinary good road; and in about three hours, we came to Holy-well. As we travelled, we had a proſpect of the town and caſtle of Flint, with the caſtle of Haywarden, and the ſeat of Sir John Glynne; neither of which, in my opinion, merit a particular deſcription.

Holy-well, or as it's called in the Britiſh language TRE-FYNNON, i. e. the town of the well; is a neat ſmall town, ſituated on the ſide of a hill. At the bottom of which is the famous well of St. Winifred, from whence the town derives its name. The well is ſurrounded with very high hills on every ſide, to which may be attributed the amazing ſpring of water. It flows, according to the relation of the inhabitants, at the rate of a ton a minute. All the miraculous powers of healing

ing attributed to theſe waters, are aſcribed to their patroneſs St. Winifred. So great is the veneration in which ſhe is held, by thoſe of the Romiſh perſuaſion, that in honor of her, they to this day, perform pilgrimages to Holy-well. You would not excuſe me, were I to relate to you all the ſtrange ſtories recorded of St. Winifred, by the monkiſh legendary writers. Theſe ſerve only to ſhew the ſuperſtition of thoſe times, and create diſguſt in a modern reader.

From Holy-well we travelled through a very indifferent road to Rhyddlan, a miſerable village, ſituated on the borders of a very extenſive marſh. The only thing for which it is remarkable, is a caſtle built by Henry II. The caſtle is extenſive, not well ſituated, nor conſtructed with taſte or elegance, and ſeems to have been ſtronger by art than nature. It is more decayed, than the generality of caſtles built in Wales about the ſame period. Some authors of conſiderable repute have aſſerted, that the caſtle of Rhyddlan was built by Edward I. as well as thoſe

of

of Carnarvon, Conway and Beaumaris. It is reaſonable to ſuppoſe otherwiſe, for its ſtructure is exceedingly different from thoſe which he built. The reaſon that the Statutum Walliæ, or the ordinances reſpecting Wales, were enacted at Rhyddlan, was moſt probably owing to the other caſtles not being then finiſhed.

The fertile vale of Clwyd, extends from Rhyddlan-marſh to the town of Rhythin, which is about fifteen miles. It is one of the moſt pleaſant and fertile vales in the whole kingdom. It has three conſiderable towns, St. Aſaph, Denbigh and Rhythin. The former is not remarked for beauty or ſituation. It is the ſee of a biſhop, and has a good cathedral.

Denbigh is ſituated upon a fine eminence, on which ariſe the turrets of a majeſtic caſtle. It is in ruins, but the very ruins are venerable. Great part of the hall is ſtill ſtanding, which the rude inhabitants miſtake for the ruins of a church. The remains of the hall, give the traveller an idea of the grandeur

deur of the place. I do not find by whom this caſtle was built, but I conjecture William Rufus, as he ſent a colony to Denbigh-land.

The proſpect from the caſtle is moſt enchanting. Beneath, the vale of Clwyd diſplays her boſom, profuſely gay to the admiring ſpectator. The banks of the river Clwyd decorated with ſeats, the towns of Rhythin and St. Aſaph, with the mountains riſing at a diſtance, form a moſt delightful view.

Rhythin is a more populous and opulent town than Denbigh, and conſiſts of better houſes; but in point of ſituation, is far inferior. There are here the ruins of a caſtle, but ſo much defaced by the hand of time, that nothing can be diſcerned, which attracts the notice of a traveller.

The counties of Denbigh and Flint are rich and populous. The low country is very fertile, and in moſt places well cultivated and improved. The Engliſh manners and cuſtoms are pretty much adopted, eſpecially by

by the inhabitants of the vale country, who ſeem to be in general of Saxon and Norman extraction, as appears by thoſe names being common in that country. Great part of Flintſhire was very early in the poſſeſſion of the Engliſh; and Denbigh-land, in the vale of Clwyd, was likewiſe colonied by ſome of the firſt princes of the Norman line.

The inhabitants of the mountainous country ſtill retain the ancient Britiſh language and cuſtoms, unadulterated with any foreign tongue. So great is the difference between the inhabitants of the mountains and the vales, that they would be taken to be natives of different countries and climates. Different not only in their manners and cuſtoms, but even in their very complexion and perſons.

I have now finiſhed the obſervations I made in my tour through the counties of Flint and Denbigh.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER III.

DEAR SIR,

THE character of the ancient inhabitants of this country, is given us in very unfavorable terms, by many hiſtorians. The Engliſh in thoſe times were almoſt always in a ſtate of war with this people, and were biaſſed by their intereſt and paſſions to repreſent them in the moſt odious colours. Giraldus Cambrenſis, whoſe connections and deſcent might have prejudiced him in favour of this country, failed not to pay court to Henry II. by traducing the Welſh. What is ſtill more extraordinary, the accurate and ingenious lord Lyttleton, has implicitly adopted

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the character given of them by the falſe and infamous Giraldus. They are repreſented by theſe hiſtorians, as having no kind idea of chaſtity. Promiſcuous concubinage, they ſay, was in a manner allowed, and no ſtigma fixed upon it. If my lord Lyttleton had conſulted Howel Dha's code, he would there have ſeen how highly they diſapproved of even the appearances of an unlawful commerce between the ſexes. I ſhall tranſcribe only one paſſage, which fully proves what I have ſaid. "Si fæmina convicta fuerit criminis turpis cum alieno viro patrati, nempe oſculationis, vel contractationis, vel adulterii, viro ſuo licet illam repudiare, et illa omittet dotem integram ſibi primitus a viro ſuo aſſignatam, ſi tantum exoſculata fuerit, ſi a cæteris abſit." By the ſame laws, if a man betrothed a woman, who did not prove to be a virgin, he was at liberty to repudiate her. Thus we ſee how cautiouſly the Welſh laws guarded the morals of the women, and how unjuſtly they were accuſed by Giraldus, and thoſe that have aſſerted the ſame on his authority.

The

The manners of every uncivilized nation are in ſome degree ſimilar. Sixteen hundred years ago, the inhabitants of Wales were nearly in the ſame ſtate of civilization, as the American ſavages are at this day. We are told of Joſeph of Arimethea's coming to Britain to plant the goſpel. This depends upon the authority of the monkiſh hiſtorians, who ſcarce contain a word of truth or probability. But it is allowed that ſome kind of Chriſtianity was planted very early in Britain, before the coming of the Saxons. Long after the Saxons came over they continued Pagans; whilſt the Britons, according to theſe hiſtorians, enjoyed the light of the goſpel. Before theſe Britons were converted to Chriſtianity, one would think it was neceſſary to convert them from ſavages to men. From the accounts that I have read, by their converſion to Chriſtianity, no more is meant than their being baptiſed, without ſo much as the imparting of any kind of faith or knowledge. This is preciſely the caſe with the modern miſſionaries, who ſend accounts

of the converſion of thouſands, who have only been ceremonioufly baptiſed, without Chriſtian inſtruction.

In the time of Henry II. the inhabitants of Wales were ſo deplorably dark, that they could not with the leaſt propriety be called Chriſtians, and many of them even profeſſed Pagans. The Don-Quixot archbiſhop, with his Sancho-Pancha, Giraldus, went upon an expedition to convert theſe Heathens. The archbiſhop preached to the poor Welſh in latin, they were baptiſed, kiſſed the croſs, and ſo the miſſion ended, to their no ſmall edification.

So late as the reign of Elizabeth, if we may believe Penry, there were but two or three that could preach in the whole principality of Wales. Some of late years have greatly promoted the cauſe of religion, by the tranſlation of pious books into that language, and diſtributing them among the poor. There is ſtill great room for improvment, as they are not only in want, but deſirous of religious knowledge.

In

In former times, the inhabitants of Wales were described to be a nation of ſoldiers. Every man being obliged to take up arms, in times of diſtreſs. Thus, though a ſmall country, they could bring large armies to the field. They uſed very light armour, as they carried on the war by incurſions, and forced marches, and conquered their enemies rather by ſurpriſe, than ſtrength or courage.

They had only a ſmall target to defend their breaſt, and uſed the javelin as a weapon of offence. Thus armed, and thus defended, they were no way equal to the Engliſh in a pitched battle, who fought with heavy armour, helmets and targets, and armed at all points.

They always fought on foot. Like all undiſciplined ſoldiers, they made one furious onſet, which if reſiſted, they were immediately put in confuſion, and could not be rallied. They fled to the mountains, where they waited for another opportunity to fall upon their enemies.

They deſpiſed trade and mechanical arts, as they in general do to this day. Though they had no money among them, yet there were no beggars in the country for they were all poor. They are deſcribed to have been impetuous in their diſpoſition, fickle, revengeful, and bloody. But let it be remembered, that this character is given them by their enemies.

Their ſuperſtition was exceſſive. They paid the greateſt veneration to their prieſts, and looked upon them and their habitations as ſacred.

I have endeavored, Sir, to give you ſome ſhort account of the manners of the ancient inhabitants of this country, as deſcribed by the moſt authentic hiſtorians. I muſt now conclude, &c.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

DEAR SIR,

IN a former letter, I gave you a deſcription of my journey from Cheſter to Denbigh; permit me now, Sir, to proceed in the account of my tour.

From Denbigh, we travelled through a hilly country, till we arrived at Conway, which is about twenty-five miles diſtant. Conway caſtle was built by Edward I. and is the admiration of all that ſee it. For ſituation, elegance, ſtrength and grandeur it is perhaps unrivalled. It is ſituated on a high rock above the ſea, and moated on the land ſide. There are ten round towers in the

caſtle, and four turrets that are conſiderably higher than the towers. The walls are battlemented, and are from twelve to fifteen feet in breadth. When we enter into the caſtle, we are ſtruck with the view of a grand arched hall, with handſome niched windows. This hall is entire; it is a hundred feet long, thirty wide, and thirty high, and the roof ſupported by nine arches of ſtone. The external part of the caſtle remains entire, as in Edward I. time, except one tower, which has tumbled into the ſea, by part of the rock giving way. On one ſide of the caſtle is a high hill, covered with a fine coppice of wood. On the other we have a proſpect over the river of ſome conſiderable ſeats, which make a beautiful appearance. The whole town is ſurrounded by a wall; and ſo ſtrongly fortified was this place, that before the invention of cannon, it muſt have been abſolutely impregnable.

I muſt not omit acquainting you, that the inns at Conway, are the worſt and moſt extravagant upon this road; which hint may be

be of ſervice to you, in caſe you ſhould travel this way.

The town of Llanrwſt is about ten miles diſtant from Conway, the road to it leads through a beautiful little vale, environed by mountains that ſcale the heavens.

Llanrwſt contains nothing remarkable, except a bridge built by Inigo Jones. This town claims the honor of being the place of his nativity. The elegant ſtructure of the bridge, leaves us no room to doubt the maſterly hand of the architect.

From Conway we paſſed over that ſtupendous rock, called Penmaenmawr. The road paſſes along the ſide of the mountain. Both beneath and above the road there are horrid precipices, with fragments of rock impending over the terrified traveller. Such roads appear tremendous, to one who has been uſed to travel a level country; but the inhabitants make nothing of riding on the very brink of a precipice. After a thaw of ſnow, or a heavy fall of rain, the looſe rocks ſometimes give way, and roll with convulſive ruins

into the ſea, carrying with them the wall built for the traveller's ſecurity. A conſiderable part of this wall was thrown down, when we paſſed. It is ſaid that a road is ſoon to be built under the mountain, through the ſea, for which two thouſand pound, I am informed, is granted by parliament.

Such as travel from Cheſter to Holy-head, ſometimes go by a place called Bwlch-y-ddau-fain, thereby avoiding Conway and Penmaenmawr. This is nearer by ſix or eight miles, but an exceeding bad mountainous road, and which I would not adviſe the traveller to take.

Bangor is about twenty miles diſtant from Conway. At low water, we have a pleaſant ride over the ſands. It is a ſmall town agreeably ſituated in a little vale, there was anciently a friary near this town, where the monks retired from Bangor-Iſſa-coed in Denbighſhire upon the maſſacre. The remains of the friary are converted into a free grammar ſchool, which is pretty well endowed, and is in a very flouriſhing ſtate. It is ſaid

that

that the famous Owen Glendowr was buried in this cathedral, and his grave is ſhewn there at this time.

The town of Carnarvon, ſo called from its ſituation CAER AR-FON, i. e. a walled town, oppoſite Angleſey, is about eight miles from Bangor, and ſtands pleaſantly ſituated on the banks of the Menai. It has a noble caſtle, built by Edward I. where his queen was brought to bed of Edward II. They ſhew the queen's bed-chamber to all traveller's that viſit this caſtle. It is built in the Roman ſtile of architecture; it has one tower eminent above the reſt called the Eagle's tour, from an eagle carved upon it. The town is ſurrounded by a wall, and ſeems to have been well fortified for thoſe days. I have heard it remarked that there are few gentlemen, but a great number of widow's that live here. In this country the women in general ſurvive the men, and the reaſon of it does not ſeem to be very problematical.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER

LETTER V.

VIRTUE, my dear friend, is not the inhabitant of uncivilized countries. She is not confined to scenes of solitude, nor always found in the unfrequented vales of rural retirement. Virtue is a plant that flourishes not in the untoward soil of nature uncivilized, and is often more an exotic in a country village, than in the crouded streets of populous cities.

The innocence of manners described by the poets, in the primæval ages of mankind, had existence only in their own imagination.

* Whoever denies this position, let him read the account of the Hottentots, the Tartars, and the savages of Asia and America, when first discovered.

Man

Man in a natural ſtate, has no other deſire or thought but the gratification of his wants. He feels only the impulſes of nature, and yields to thoſe feelings. If we may define virtue to be a reſiſtance, in a certain degree, to the force of our natural propenſities; he knows not, nor acknowledges any ſuch power. Nature alone is his empreſs, he feels her ſway, and pays obedience to her commands.

The ideas of beauty and merit, the one ariſing from perſonal, the other from mental accompliſhments, depend upon abſtract reaſonings, and compariſons formed in the mind. The farther we are removed from a ſtate of civilization, the leſs capable are we of forming theſe ideas. Love, therefore, in its refined ſtate, kindled by the flame of beauty, and founded on the ſolid baſis of perſonal merit, muſt conſequently be peculiarly the characteriſtic of civilized nations. Hence the very meaning of the term, conſidered as the tender ſympathy of congenial ſouls, is never known in many countries. The Aſiatics, Africans, Americans and Dutch, are altogether

ther ſtrangers to any ſuch idea. They can fix no other ſignification to the word love, than that paſſion which nature wiſely implanted in all animals, preventive of the annihilation of their ſpecies. They have no predilection for any object. The perſon is no conſideration with them. If the end nature had in view is anſwered, they are ſatisfied. Thus they avoid all thoſe inquietudes ariſing from perſonal predilection, the prolific ſource of jealouſies and animoſities, which diſturb the peace of ſociety.

Theſe obſervations may not be altogether inapplicable to the people, whoſe manners I am deſcribing. I do not find that either of the ſexes are capable of forming any violent attachment, or perſonal affection. All are to them indifferent, except where fortuitous external cauſes have deſtroyed their equality.

In all countries cuſtom has eſtabliſhed ſome forms, previous to connubial connections. In many places, cuſtom acts the part of an inexorable tyrant, whoſe rigid commands we muſt implicitly obey. Here ſhe bears

bears a milder ſway. I will not offend the ear of delicacy, with a deſcription of what had better be concealed. I may ſay, that in general the women diſcover ſuch prognoſtics, before they enter into the marriage ſtate, as denote they will not be unfruitful members of ſociety. Nor does cuſtom ſtamp the opprobious ſtigma of infamy upon ſuch an appearance.

The ceremonies attending the marriages of theſe people, may afford you ſome entertainment, as they are different from any thing of the kind, that may have fallen within your obſervation.

The bridegroom on the morning of the wedding, accompanied with a troop of his friends, as well equipped as the country will allow, comes and demands the bride. Her friends, who are likewiſe well mounted on their MERLINS *, give a poſitive refuſal to their demands, whereupon a mock ſcuffle enſues between the parties. The bride is mounted on one of the beſt ſteeds, behind

* The Welſh word for a little mountain horſe.

her

her next kinſman, who rides away with her in full career. The bridegroom and his friends, purſue them with loud ſhouts. It is not uncommon to ſee, on ſuch an occaſion, two or three hundred of theſe merlins, mounted by ſturdy Cambro-Britons, riding with full ſpeed, croſſing and joſtling each other, to the no ſmall amuſement of the ſpectators. When they have pretty well fatigued themſelves and their horſes, the bridegroom is permitted to overtake his bride. He leads her away in triumph, as the Romans did the Sabine nymphs. They all return in amity, and the whole is concluded with feſtivity and mirth.

Let us now view the women, in the very eſſential characters of wives and mothers. You would naturally ſuppoſe, that a young woman who had, without fear or reſtraint, enjoyed an almoſt unbounded liberty in a ſingle ſtate, would not be eaſily debarred from enjoying the ſame in the married. But the caſe is the very reverſe. Infidelity to the bed of Hymen, is ſcarce ever known or heard

of

of in this country. Adultery is a weed that grows in the rank ſoil of a court, foſtered by luxury and vanity.

Mankind form an untrue judgment from external appearances; thoſe are eſteemed virtuous, who have had their education in a boarding ſchool or nunnery. Perſuaded I am, the caſe is quite different. The greater number of ſhackles with which we fetter human nature, the more ſhe ſtrives to gain her native freedom. Forbidden pleaſures are coveted, whilſt thoſe within our reach are neglected. The various methods of confinement in foreign countries, makes their taſte for illicit pleaſures more poignant, and incites them to run riſks for their gratification. When you indulge them in the power, you in ſome degree take away the temptation to vice.

In the character of wives, the women of this country are laborious, induſtrious and chaſte. In that of mothers, they nurture their robuſt offspring, not in ſloth and inacti-

vity,

vity, but enure them early to undergo hardſhips and fatigues.

Let the fair daughters of indolence and eaſe, contemplate the characters of theſe patterns of induſtry, who are happily unacquainted with the gay follies of life. Who enjoy health without medicine, and happineſs without affluence. Equally remote from the grandeur and the miſeries of life, they participate of the ſweet bleſſings of content, under the homely dwelling of a ſtraw-built cottage.

Adieu, my friend, &c.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

DEAR SIR,

IN giving a general deſcription of the manners of this country, I would always, be underſtood to except many individuals, who happily cannot be included under the general character. During my continuance here, I have met with ſome poſſeſſed of every virtue that can adorn humanity. Such as do honor to human nature, in all countries, are but few, when compared to thoſe that diſgrace it. Here the number is not leſs proportionate.

However my reſpect for a few individuals, might incline me to ſpeak partially of the

country. The ſacred regard I bear to the cauſe of truth, ſtops my pen. She commands me to repreſent them as they are,

Nothing extenuate, nor ſet down ought in malice.

The country gentlemen in England, or rather let me ſay eſquires; an appellation they eſteem more honorable, and I own more ſuitable; have been generally repreſented, not unjuſtly, as a ſet of beings, who have no other employment, or diverſion, except that of the chace and the glaſs. They ſpend the whole morning in the one, and the evening in the other. Without learning and without knowledge, their minds like their eſtates lie fallow and unimproved. The entertainment of the animal is their only buſineſs, while the man is neglected. The fable of the centaurs is literally verified in this claſs of beings, for the beaſt runs away with the man. As the objects of their attention are confined, ſo are their ideas, and the topics of their converſation.

I will

I will not ſay the 'ſquires in Wales, differ materially from thoſe of the ſame rank in England, except that they are more devoted to the jolly god. For like the Thracians of old, when a ſtranger comes among them, they will do him the honors of the houſe *, by obliging him to drink intemperately; and will at leaſt expect him to make a compliment of his reaſon, in return for their hoſpitality. They have, however, ſome good qualities, in a greater degree than the Engliſh. They keep better houſes, employ a greater number of poor, are leſs avaritious, and far more charitable.

The clergy are in general the only people that have any knowledge of letters; to qualify them for orders, they have the advantage of a good ſchool education; and ſpend a conſiderable time at the univerſity. It is the general, and I believe well founded, com-

* In every houſe that I viſited in Wales, they had a capacious horn, or other enormous utenſil, which they obliged every man to drink that came, filled with CWRW, the Welſh word for ſtrong ale.

plaint of the country, that they return from thence very little improved, in their morals or learning. A certain air of pedantry, accompanied with vain aſſurance, and the acquiſition of ſome faſhionable vices, are too often the only means of diſtinguiſhing ſuch as have had an univerſity education.

An academy, under proper regulations, in the country would, I think, be a more ſuitable place for inſtructing youth for the church. It would be attended with leſs expence, and greater care might be taken of their morals and religion, the principal object.

Moſt of the clergy have two or three churches each to ſerve, and conſequently it is impoſſible the duty ſhould be properly diſcharged. Evening prayers are ſeldom read, and in many places they ſcarce ever preach. The benefices are for the moſt part of pretty conſiderable value, being a decent maintainence for a clergyman. Except in a few towns, and on the borders of England, the ſervice of their churches is performed altogether in the Welſh or old Britiſh tongue.

The

The yeomanry and peaſants are very civil and obliging in their behavior. They have not the ferocious diſpoſition, which characteriſes the Engliſh, flowing from that ſpirit of liberty and independence, which animates the ſoul of an Engliſhman. They are ſhrewd and artful in their dealings. They have an inveterate rooted antipathy to all foreigners, eſpecially Engliſh and Iriſh. If a ſtranger is ſo unfortunate as to go and live amongſt them, they look upon him with a jealous eye, as one who comes with an intent to deprive them of their ſubſiſtence.

The manner of living of the lower claſs of people, is extremely poor. The chief of their ſubſiſtence, being barley and oat bread. They ſcarce ever eat fleſh, or drink any thing but milk. They are not of that paſſionate and choleric temper, as the Engliſh deſcribe them, but ſlow, deliberate, and wary in their ſpeech and conduct, and ſubmiſſive in their diſpoſition. I know not whether to attribute it to their manner of life, or

to the great power the 'ſquires exerciſe over them. Certain it is, that the people of this country in general, have no greater idea of Engliſh liberty than the peaſants of France.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

DEAR SIR,

IN my two laſt letters, I endeavoured to give you ſome idea of the manners of this people; I ſhall reſerve the diſagreeable taſk of finiſhing the portrait, till another opportunity. Let us now vary our ſubject, and contemplate the face of nature; which however rugged her appearance may be, affords a more pleaſing proſpect, than the rude and uninformed heart of man.

From Carnarvonſhire, we croſſed over the Menai, into the iſland of Angleſea. It is called the river Menai, though in fact it is an arm of the ſea, ſeperating Angleſea from

Carnarvonſhire. In the narroweſt part, it is about the ſame breadth as the Thames at Weſtminſter-bridge. The principal town in the iſland is Beaumaris, it received this name in the time of Edward I. who built the caſtle, and is derived from the French Beau-marais*, which language was then prevalent, and is deſcriptive of its ſituation. A fine green lawn before the town, from whence we have a charming proſpect of the Carnarvonſhire mountains, with a haven of the ſea, renders this place delightful. The town is in a declining condition. Before Liverpool became ſo great a mart, this place carried on a conſiderable trade, which it has now entirely loſt. It conſiſts of two or three good ſtreets, better built than the greateſt number of Welſh towns. The caſtle is not to be compared to thoſe of Carnarvon and Conway

* Beau-marais, ſignifies in French a fine marſh, the ſituation of this town exactly correſponds with this derivation. Part of Paris, which is ſituated very low, is called Du-marais, i. e. of the marſh.

for

for beauty, though perhaps not inferior in point of ſtrength.

Baron-hill, the ſeat of lord Bulkeley, is ſituated upon an eminence, about half a mile diſtant from the town. It commands an extenſive and very beautiful proſpect. The houſe is not to be admired, but I prefer the ſituation to any that I have ſeen in Wales.

From Beaumaris we travelled through the whole extent of the county, till we came to Holy-head; which ſtands on a promontory, in the remoteſt corner of the iſland. This little town is a ſea-port, where the Dublin packets are ſtationed. It is a place of conſiderable reſort, populous, and in a flouriſhing ſtate.

We had a very unpleaſing journey from Beaumaris to this place. The roads were exceeding deep; our horſes ſunk into the clay, ſo that it was with the utmoſt difficulty we travelled. But the turnpike roads in this county, are not inferior to any in the kingdom. During our whole day's journey, we ſcarce ſaw a tree, or a gentleman's ſeat.

The

The face of the county affords a diſagreeable and melancholy proſpect, though the land is ſaid to be rich and fertile.

Curioſity induced me to view the ſeat of the ancient Britiſh princes, Aberfraw: but how much were my expectations diſappointed! It is a little country village, without any remains of grandeur, or monuments of antiquity, that I could diſcern.

I was told that part of the wall of the king's palace, was converted into a barn. It is aſtoniſhing how the princes of North-Wales, could have choſen ſuch a ſituation for their reſidence; eligible for no reaſon that can now be conceived.

From Aberfraw we croſſed the ſands, and came to a corporation town, called Newborough. This place had a right of returning a member to ſerve in parliament, which they have loſt for ſome years. It appeared to me, to be an exceeding poor place; but I was told that the inhabitants were all ſo induſtrious, that there was not a beggar in the whole place; and indeed we did not find that

that any one aſked alms of us; a circumſtance not very common in little country towns.

The laſt place we viſited in the iſland of Angleſea, was the ſeat of Sir Nicholas Bayly. It is built in the gothic ſtile, with great elegance and ſtate. Its ſituation on the banks of the Menai, with a proſpect of the mountains at a diſtance, renders it the admiration of all who ſee it. After our tedious journey through the iſland, we were agreeably entertained with the viciſſitudes we here experienced, imagination cannot form a ſcene more adapted for ſolemn meditation. The ſacred monuments of druidical antiquity, ſurrounded with the thick imbowering ſhades of venerable oaks, render this place the ſeat of contemplation; and put me in mind of thoſe beautiful lines in Mr. Warton's Pleaſures of Melancholy:

Hail, queen divine! whom as tradition tells,
Once in his evening walk a druid found,
Far in a hollow glade of Mona's woods;
And piteous bore with hoſpitable hand,

To

To the cloſe ſhelter of his oaken bow'r.
There ſoon the ſage admiring, marked the dawn
Of ſolemn muſing in your penſive thought,
For when a ſmiling babe you loved to lie,
Oft deep liſtening to the rapid roar
Of wood-hung Menai, ſtream of druids old,
That laved his hallow'd haunt with daſhing wave.

Adieu, Sir, &c.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

DEAR SIR,

IT is much to be regretted, that a full account of the antiquities of Wales has never been publiſhed. There are ample materials, to employ the pen of an antiquary. Mr. Edward Llwyd of the Muſæum at Oxford, made many valuable and curious collections for ſuch a work, and likewiſe for a compleat natural hiſtory of the country. He lived not to finiſh ſo great an undertaking; and the public are to lament, that no one has been found, who is poſſeſſed of knowledge and aſſiduity, to finiſh his deſign. The materials that he left behind him are ſtill extant,

extant, and I am informed, may be procured without much difficulty, by any one who will execute his plan.

There were, before the reformation, large eſtates in Wales, dedicated to religious uſes. In every county are ſtill to be ſeen the venerable remains of many religious houſes, monaſteries, and friaries. The people of this country, were formerly proverbially remarked for their ſuperſtition; which makes it the leſs to be admired, that holy church had ſo many domains in Wales.

During the few months I have reſided in this country, it cannot be ſuppoſed that I could minutely inveſtigate into the hiſtory of all the religious houſes. And were I thoroughly acquainted with every particular relating to ſuch a ſubject, it would greatly exceed the bounds of an epiſtolary correſpondence, to enter into a minute deſcription of them.

During our literary intercourſe, I ſhall endeavor to furniſh you with an account of all the principal caſtles and fortifications that

are

are now ſtanding. The moſt conſiderable, are ſuch as were built by the Engliſh and Normans. I do not find that the Britons built their fortifications in the manner of the Engliſh. The Britiſh fortreſſes were of a circular form, the ramparts conſiſted of mounds of earth, thrown up with three circumvallations and foſſes, of a ſimilar conſtruction with Old Sarum. A variety of theſe fortifications and encampments are to be ſeen, on almoſt every hill through the country. On the ſea ſhore, in every place where the enemy could with ſafety land, the remains are ſtill to be diſcerned.

The great muſæum of druidical, as well as other antiquities, is the iſland of Angleſea. Some account has been publiſhed by Mr. Rowland's, in his Mona Antiqua. An author of no ſmall repute amongſt antiquarians, and highly venerated in that country. He was doubtleſs a man of great application and ſome learning. His Mona Antiqua conſiſts rather of an account of the antiquities of his own pariſh and neighbourhood,

than

than of the whole iſland of Angleſea. We find in it ſome ingenious obſervations, and accurate remarks. But replete with ill-founded conjectures, and ſtrained etymologies, the moſt ridiculous exertion of ſcience. He derives the Welſh or Britiſh language from the Hebrew, without any other foundation, than the congruity of ſound of a few words, with which it has manifeſtly no more affinity, than it has with the Chineſe. Praiſe is however due to his labors, and I mean not to detract from his merit.

The remains of druidical antiquities, are very frequent over the whole iſland of Angleſea; near Plas-Newydd, the ſeat of Sir Nicholas Bayly, which I deſcribed in a former letter, there is a druidical altar ſtill remaining entire. In various places are to be ſeen the CARNS, or more properly CARNEDDI. Theſe are generally ſituated on an eminence, and conſiſt of a large tumulus of ſtones. The vulgar attribute them to the work of giants. The truth ſeems to be, that they are the ſepulchres of perſons of renown. When the general

general of an army died, or was killed in battle, it was uſual for all who lamented him, to throw a ſtone upon his grave. The greater the tumulus, the more honorable was his interment. Though this practice has been probably diſuſed for ages, yet it is a common expreſſion in the country to this day, to ſay of a man that died unlamented, Ni rhof i mor carreg ar iw fedd, i. e. I will not throw a ſtone upon his grave. Mr. Macpherſon, in a book he has lately publiſhed, ſays, "That in the highlands of Scotland there are many of theſe tumuli, which they call Carns, and that he cauſed many of them to be thrown down, and always found under the heap, ſome ſtones placed in the form of a coffin, and often the bones remaining." I wanted not inclination to have the experiment tried here, but had neither time nor opportunity to make ſuch a trial; and I much queſtion, whether the people of the country are not ſo ſuperſtitious, as to prevent any ſuch attempts.

Beſides the CARNEDDE juſt deſcribed, there are many ORSEDDE, or ORSEDD-FAINCIA, and CROMLÈCHE. I conjecture the cromleche to have been ſtones, where the druids ſacrificed to their deities. We have leſs doubt concerning the orſedde, or orſedd-faincia. For it is not queſtioned from the import of the word, as well as their appearance, but that they were druidical judgment ſeats. In thoſe times, the druids were prieſts, lawgivers and judges. The veneration paid to their ſacred characters, gave weight and authority to their deciſions. In this the Britains reſembled the accounts given of the Germans, and Gauls by Tacitus and Cæſar. I ſhall forbear ſaying any thing farther at preſent upon this point, as I ſhall have occaſion to mention it in a future letter, when I come to ſpeak of the laws of the ancient Britons.

It does not appear that the Welſh, or Britiſh princes, ever coined any money. They paid their mulcts, like the Germans, in cattle. Luitur certo armentorum aut pecorum numero. I allow that in particular caſes, a fine

was

was to be paid in gold or ſilver; for offences committed againſt the perſon of the king or queen. For defiling the prince's bed, the offender was to pay a rod of pure ſolid gold, of the thickneſs of a plowman's finger, that had ploughed nine years, in length from the ground to the prince's mouth when ſitting. In what part of Wales ſuch a quantity of gold was then to be found, is a myſtery that I will not undertake to unfold.

I am afraid I weary your patience on this ſubject, and muſt conclude, by aſſuring you that I am

Yours, &c.

LETTER IX.

I HAVE not, my dear friend, in any former letter deſcribed to you the place of my reſidence in this country, the ſcene from whence theſe letters have been written.

After I had finiſhed my tour of North Wales, I determined to fix upon the moſt romantic and unfrequented ſituation, for the ſcene of a few month's retirement. A place where I could not be interrupted with the impertinent intruſion of affected gentility, or diſguſted with the ridiculous ceremonies of falſe politeneſs. I did not long heſitate in my choice. The ſituation of this place, and the great abundance of game, the country afforded,

forded, confirmed my determination. I board with the curate of the pariſh, who is the only perſon in the neighbourhood capable of converſing with me. The curate is a venerable clergyman, on the eve of threeſcore. He wears his own natural grey locks, and ſtill retains a ruddy bloom in his countenance, acquired by health and exerciſe. He has lived among theſe mountains for near forty years, upon a curacy and a little paternal eſtate, which he cultivates with his own hands. His whole revenue amounts not to forty pounds per annum, and yet that exceeds his expences,

Whoſe little ſtore, his well taught mind does pleaſe,
Not pinched with want, nor cloy'd with wanton eaſe;
Who free from ſtorms, which on the great ones fall,
Makes but few wiſhes, and enjoys them all.

ROSCOMMON.

This place is a ſmall village among the Carnarvonſhire hills, ſituated in a valley, ſurrounded on every ſide by rocks and mountains, through which a river winds its irriguous courſe. We are never at a loſs for rural diverſions. Earth, air and water vie with each other in furniſhing us entertainment. Our table is ſpread by our induſtry. The ſame exerciſe contributes to our health and our amuſement; and at the ſame time that our exerciſe gives us an appetite, it procures us alſo the means of ſatisfying it. Our craft and ſubtlety is not employed (as it is among the greateſt part of mankind) againſt our own ſpecies; we carry on an innocent war againſt thoſe animals, over which the bountiful Creator gave us a ſovereignty.

Various were the conjectures of the country people concerning me, when firſt I came to this place. What commenced in ſuſpicion, was likely to terminate in antipathy, but by the proper application of a few pieces of glittering ore, and the knowledge of a few Welſh words, I ſoon became highly reſpected.

And

And they all obey my commands, as readily as any monarch is obeyed by his ſubjects.

I had long a deſire of viſiting the Welſh Alps, the ſummit of Snowdon *. The curate was ſo much devoted to me, that I did not employ my rhetoric long, before I prevailed upon him to accompany me in the expedition. We ſet out from our hermitage, in the month of July; we arrived in the evening at a ſmall thatched hut, at the foot of the mountain, near a lake which they call Llyn Cychwhechlyn, which I leave you to pronounce as well as you are able. At this hut we found a poor labouring man, with five or ſix children, the pictures of health and innocence. We had brought proviſions with us for our journey, and we regaled ourſelves in this ſituation, the family partaking of our feaſt, with more ſatisfaction and

* Snowdon, comprehended formerly the counties of Merionydd and Carnarvon, and the mountainous part of Denbighſhire; it is now confined to a mountain of that name.

glee, than I have ever found at a nobleman's ſumptuous entertainment.

We were determined to amuſe ourſelves, as well as we could in this dreary ſituation. For this purpoſe we ſent for a poor blind harper, and procured a number of blooming country girls to divert us with their muſic and dancing. There is ſomething very plaintive and affecting in the Welſh muſic, and the manner of their ſinging ſymphonious and reſponſive to the notes of the harp, renders it exceeding melodious. It gave me infinitely more pleaſure to hear this ruſtic concert, than the fineſt airs of an Italian opera; and to ſee theſe roſy rural nymphs direct their mazy ſteps, without the needleſs ſumptuous apparel of luxury and pride, than all the ladies at St. James's, in their artificial beauty and attire.

At the dawn of day, we began our journey up the mountain, which ſeemed to ſcale the heavens. I cannot give you a better deſcription of it, than is contained in the following lines of Mr. Pope:

So pleaſed at firſt the tow'ring Alps we try,
Mount o'er the vales and ſeem to tread the ſky;
Th' eternal ſnows appear already paſt,
And the firſt clouds and mountains ſeem the laſt.
But thoſe attained, we trembled to ſurvey,
The growing labors of the lengthened way;
The increaſing proſpect tires our wandring eyes,
Hills peep o'er hills and alps o'er alps ariſe.

We found a great change in the temperature of the atmoſphere, as we aſcended the mountain. When we had gone half way up, we found the wind rather high, attended with ſcudding clouds. But when we arrived at the ſummit, the air was calm and ſerene, and ſeemed much more ſubtle and rarified, leſs impregnated with vapors, and more agreeable for reſpiration.

Hid above the clouds,
Tho' winds and tempeſts beat their aged feet;
Their

Their peaceful heads, nor ſtorms, nor tempeſts know,
But ſcorn the threatning rack that rolls below.

DRYDEN.

How ſhall I deſcribe to you the infinitely extenſive and variegated proſpects we enjoyed from the ſummit? lakes, mountains, ſeas, rivers, plains, woods and iſlands lay before us, in the greateſt diverſity. We ſaw diſtinctly the north of England, the greateſt part of Wales, Cheſhire, Shropſhire, Ireland, the iſle of Man and Scotland. I doubt whether ſo extenſive a circular proſpect is to be ſeen in any part of the terraqueous globe.

As our ſituation was exalted above the globe, ſo were our ideas. And the nearer we were to the etherial regions, the more our ſouls ſeemed to partake of their purity. Our minds like the ſerene face of the ſky, undiſturbed with the ſtorms of the paſſions became equal and compoſed. We were inſpired with ſentiments of commiſeration and contempt, in

in contemplating the vain magnificence of human grandeur; and the purſuits of the world, for a few pieces of ore, which nature prudently concealed in the bowels of theſe mountains.

O my friend, why ſhould we return to the buſy haunt of men? why were we doomed to drag an exiſtence in populous cities and the crouded forum! O that it had been our lot to live among theſe mountains, unenvied and unknown!

Excuſe, my friend, theſe reveries. I ſhall endeavor to atone for them, by haſtening to a concluſion. The ſun had now gained its meridian height, and ſhot forth its noontide rays with unuſual fervor. When we began to deſcend the hill, we perceived a ſmall murky cloud riſe out of the ſea. The cloud condenſed and increaſed, until the whole atmoſphere became inveloped in darkneſs, and night ſeemed to have regained her ebon throne. Neither houſe nor tree was near to afford us protection, but all was one vaſt continued waſte.

In

In this ſituation we could only have recourſe to the hoſpitable ſhelter of the next impending rock. Here we awaited with fear and impatience, till the ſtorm was ſpent.

Either tropic now,
'Gan thunder; at both ends of heaven the clouds
From many a horrid rift abortive pour'd
Fierce rain with lightning mix'd, water with fire,
In ruin reconcil'd. Dreadful was the rack,
As earth and ſky would mingle.

MILTON.

The thunder reverberated from rock to rock, and the whole artillery of heaven ſeemed to be at once diſcharged.

Amid Carnarvon's mountains rages loud
The repercuſſive roar. With mighty cruſh
Into the flaſhing deep, from the rude rocks
Of Penmaenmawr heap'd hideous to the ſky,

Tumble

Tumble the ſmitten cliffs, and Snowdon's heap
Diſſolving inſtant, yields his wintry load.
THOMPSON.

When the ſtorm was appeaſed, and the face of heaven had reaſſumed its wonted ſerenity, we continued our journey. Pleaſed, though fatigued, with our excurſion, we regained our homely dwelling, from whence I have now the happineſs of writing to you, and aſſuring you that I am,

Dear Sir, Yours, &c.

LETTER X.

DEAR SIR,

IN obſerving the manners and cuſtoms of this people, ſome idea may be formed of their anceſtors, the ancient Britons. They have preſerved themſelves almoſt intirely diſtinct from all other nations. They poſſeſſed nothing that could tempt the ambition of foreigners. Having no allurement from a proſpect of commercial advantage, or the charms of opulence and fertility; they remained ſtrangers to a country which afforded no incitement to avarice or ambition. Thus, I will not ſay unhappily, excluded from the conflux of ſtrangers, the pure Britiſh blood

blood flows unadulterated in their veins. Their cuſtoms, manners, virtues, and even vices, are preſerved as a ſacred depoſitum, inherited from their anceſtors, and obſerved with religious veneration.

My friend, the curate, of whom I gave ſome account in my laſt letter, ſupplies me with every neceſſary information, reſpecting the language, manners, and cuſtoms of this people, whoſe veracity cannot be ſuſpected.

I have already deſcribed to you the different ceremonies, attending the marriages of this people, they are no leſs ſingular in their funerals.

The evening preceding the burial, they have what they call WYL-NOS, i. e. the night of lamentation. All the neighbors attend at the houſe of the deceaſed, the miniſter, or in his abſence the clerk of the pariſh, comes and prays over the dead, and pſalms are ſung agreeable to the mournful occaſion. This it may not unreaſonably be ſuppoſed, is the remains of the Romiſh ſuperſtition of requiems for the ſouls of the deceaſed. How-

ever

ever there is nothing improper in the cuſtom if conducted with decorum and devotion, which is not always the caſe. At the funeral, the relations and friends of the deceaſed make preſents, to the officiating clergyman, and the clerk of the pariſh. Theſe offerings are altogether voluntary, generally proportionable to their circumſtances, and the reſpect they bear to the memory of their departed friend. In ſome populous pariſhes, the offerings are very conſiderable, and conſtitute a great part of the profits of a living. There is no doubt but that this is likewiſe a relict of the Popiſh cuſtom, of giving money to their prieſts, for praying that the ſoul of the deceaſed may be relieved from purgatory.

It is a cuſtom likewiſe invariably obſerved to make a bonfire near every houſe on All-ſaints eve. Whether this was originally owing to public rejoicing, or to ſome ſuperſtitious ceremony, I could never be informed.

Among the amuſements of the country, the principal are the ſtage plays. You will ſmile, when I tell you that we have comedies

and

and tragedies. King David and Solomon are often brought upon the ſtage, and are taught to ſpeak pure Welſh. Theſe entertainments are called ANTERLUTES, which ſeems to be no more than a corruption of the Engliſh word interlude.

My curioſity prevailed upon me to go and ſee one of theſe plays acted, the ſtage conſiſted of ſome boards fixed at the end of a barn; beneath it was the green room; for it was a ſmall incloſure made up of furze. The play that was acted, was king Lear; but ſo mutilated and murdered, that I was told it had ſcarce any other reſemblance to the play written by Shakeſpeare, than the name. It was not unentertaining to ſee theſe brawny ploughmen, act in the characters of Lear's daughters.

The two principal characters which they never fail to introduce into every play, are thoſe of the fool and miſer. The former uſes all kind of indecent ribaldry, obſcene geſtures, and expreſſions, which generally prove highly entertaining to the audience.

This repreſentation put me in mind of the deſcription, given by Horace, of the firſt comic actors.

Dicitur et plaſtris vexaſſe poemata Theſpis.

The people of this country are not inferior in ſuperſtition to the Laplanders. The moſt improbable and abſurd tales of haunted houſes, demons, and apparitions, are related and believed. Nor can many be found ſo hardy, as to doubt the exiſtence of witches, fairies, elves, and all the bugbears of a winter's eve.

Adieu, Sir, &c.

LETTER XI.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE heard it often aſſerted that mankind are the ſame in all countries. This, if true, will deſtroy the very idea of national characters. And yet experience will juſtify the obſervation, that there is a very wide difference between the inhabitants of Aſia and Europe, between thoſe of Spain, France and England, and even between the Engliſh and Iriſh. If no more is meant by ſuch an obſervation, than that man in a ſtate of nature, is the ſame in every country, I will admit it to be true. But man is no longer what nature formed him. Education

has furniſhed him with vices, with prejudices, with a certain range of ideas, and mode of thinking, which ſtamp his character. Hence the difference of faſhion, conduct and character which we obſerve in every country.

In a ſtate of nature, the wants of man are merely phyſical, confined to the ſuſtenance of corporeal exiſtence. In a ſtate of ſociety moſt of his neceſſities are acquired, at firſt imaginary, and in proceſs of time become real. How few are the wants of the peaſant, who dwells in a ſtraw-built hut, on a barren mountain, which the avarice of man has not reduced to property, compared to thoſe of the lord nurſed in the cradle of indolence and luxury!

It was in a ſtate of ſociety, that Hobbes ought to have ſought for his ſtate of war, and not in that of nature. It is in ſociety that the intereſts of mankind perpetually claſh with each other. Many purſue the ſame object; aſpire to the ſame poſt or employment. We all pay our devoirs to the inchanting goddeſs gold; the ſuppoſed diſ-

penſer

penſer of all ſublunary happineſs. The goddeſs ſmiles on ſome of her votaries, frowns on others. Her diſcarded devotees endeavor to ſupplant ſuch as ſhare her favors. Every engine which imagination can invent, is uſed to effectuate the purpoſe. This is the box of Pandora, from whence all the evils and calamities of life proceed. Hence deceit is become a neceſſary art, taught in the ſchool of the world, univerſally ſtudied and univerſally admired. It is the ladder of preferment, and the ſtep of ambition. Its perfection is called politeneſs, and its defect ruſticity. In different degrees it is uſed by all; from the courtier who pours the delicious poiſon of flattery into his prince's ears, to the ruſtic peaſant who bows to the little tyrant of a country village.

An unpoliſhed people cannot have attained to the refinement of deceit, that we find among the more civilized nations. Hence the idea of inſincerity is always, not improperly, connected with the politeneſs of a

courtier, and French complaiſance and deceit are joined as inſeperable companions.

If we would view the heart of man without diſguiſe, it is among the rude and uncivilized inhabitants of mountains. Too artleſs to conceal the dictates of their hearts, the tongue reveals the ſentiments of the mind. Hence thoſe paſſions which are concealed or diſguiſed in more civilized countries, appear here in their native colors.

The nationality, if I may ſo call it, of the Scotch, has been proverbial, and it is owing to that mutual ſupport, that they have made ſo conſpicuous a figure. The natives of this country are in no degree remarked for this quality; to this it may be attributed, that they ſcarce ever riſe to any conſiderable ſtation or eminence in any profeſſion or department; unplaced and unpenſioned, they are perhaps the only part of the king's ſubjects, who have not had ſome ſhare in the profits of government, and enjoyed ſome of the ſpoils of the public. Thus without the mutual friendly aſſiſtance of each other, or

the

the ſunſhine of court favor, they ſeldom emerge from their original obſcurity.

O pure and immaculate friendſhip; thou gem, whoſe luſtre remains unimpaired by the deſolating hand of time, and undiminiſhed by the rough ſtorm of adverſe fortune, who receiveſt additional ſplendor from age, and ſhineſt bright under the ſevereſt trial! Art thou to be found among theſe deſart rocks, or in the fertile plains of cultivated nature.

Thou art not the partial inhabitant of country or clime. The ſympathetic feelings of the heart, thy offspring exiſt only in the minds of the ingenuous few, whoſe ſouls are caſt in the ſame mould, whoſe union is founded on the ſolid baſis of merit and eſteem, and cemented by delicacy of manners. That connection which the vulgar call friendſhip, which ariſes from the participation of the ſame brutal pleaſures, is as fleeting as thoſe pleaſures, which gave it birth. The intimacy accruing from the ſociety of an idle hour, which had better been blotted from the hoary calendar of time, or the ſame convi-

vial feſtivity, as it has its exiſtence, ſo it ends with the circulating glaſs.

O thou guileleſs and unſuſpicious youth, who art now launching thy bark, and unfurling thy ſails, to commence the difficult and dangerous voyage of life! Who fondly expecteſt the ſunſhine of fortune, and the gales of proſperity, to ſpeed thy deſtined voyage. But be prepared to encounter ſtorms and tempeſts, and know that thou mayeſt meet with treacherous and unſkilful pilots, who will endeavor to ſink thee in the quick-ſands of misfortune, and wreck thee on the rocks of deſpair. Steer by the helm of prudence, let religion be thy anchor, and induſtry thy pilot, ſo ſhalt thou ſtem the rough torrents of adverſe fortune, and bring thy veſſel to the haven of peace, where all thy labors will have an end.

Adieu, my friend, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XII.

DEAR SIR,

I FIND you are diſpleaſed with my philoſophical reveries. Be aſſured, you ſhall be troubled with no more of them. I am, however, determined that you ſhall do penance for your diſapprobation, not by walking bare-foot to the ſhrine of St. Winifred, but by having the drudgery impoſed on you of reading the following letter.

Our journey from Carnarvon to this town, has been through a country the moſt rocky, and abounding with the moſt romantic proſpects, that we have travelled ſince we came to Wales. We paſſed under Snowdon, thro' a village

a village called Berthgelet. Two conſiderable lakes are adjacent to the road, in which the falſe pen of Giraldus ſays, there were floating iſlands, and which is now affirmed by ſome, who have as little regard to truth as Giraldus. This ſide the village of Berthgelet, is the famous Pont-Aber-glaſslyn. This is a bridge thrown over a conſiderable water-fall, from one mountain to another. Contiguous to it is a ſalmon leap, where the fiſh continually make efforts to leap up a rock, about ſix yards high, to lay their ſpawn; a net is placed under the rock, in order to catch them as they fall. So ſtupendous is the ſtructure of this bridge, in the eyes of the ignorant country people, that they do not heſitate to pronounce it to be the work of ſupernatural agency. It may be curious to know upon what condition his ſatanic majeſty would turn maſter builder. The agreement was drawn up by one of his agents, who aſſumed the not unuſual form a lawyer, and thereby it was covenanted, ſtipulated, ratified, agreed, and a thouſand more ſuch redundant words,

and

and the condition of the obligation was ſuch, that his infernal highneſs was to have the firſt that went over the bridge for his trouble and expence. But a method was contrived to defraud him, by driving a dog over, which was all the pay he had for building the famous bridge of Aber-glaſslyn. Why ſhould this account be thought more extraordinary, than the deſcription we have in Milton of Sin and Death building a bridge over chaos to this world.

The ſituation of Aber-glaſslyn is exceeding romantic, the rocks impend over you, ſo that you may with truth ſay,

Tres pateat cæli ſpatium non amplias ulnas.

The ſpacious round of heaven which all contains,
To thee ſhort ells on earth our ſight reſtrains.
DRYDEN'S VIRGIL.

From hence we croſſed a dangerous ſand, called Traeth-maur, and came to Harlech caſtle. This is a very magnificent ſtructure

ſituated

ſituated on an eminence. Beneath it there is a fine marſh of ſome miles extent, upon which the ſea adjoins. It does not clearly appear by whom this caſtle was built; though we may conjecture that it is the work of ſome of the firſt kings of the Norman line.

On the oppoſite ſhore of Avionydd, we ſee the caſtle of Crycaith. This is ſituated on a ſmall hill, waſhed on one ſide by the ſea. The aſcent to it is very ſteep quaquaverſally. The caſtle is but very ſmall, in compariſon to thoſe I have already deſcribed. It is not improbable but that this caſtle was built by ſome of the Welſh or Britiſh princes. Tradition informs us that all that part, now covered with the ſea, between Crycaith and Harlech, was formerly a fine level country, called Cantref-Gwaelod, i. e. the plain of a hundred townſhips. Some manuſcripts in Welſh, I am informed, give an account of the ſea over-flowing this plain, but at what time this happened does not appear, or whether ever it was different from what it is at preſent, I am greatly inclined to doubt.

From

From Harlech we purſued our journey to Tan-y-bwlch, in the vale of Feſtiniog. Here we reſted a night, at a ſmall inn, where we met with very good accommodations. The vale of Feſtiniog has been much admired by travellers. The meanders of a winding ſtream, the wood-capt hills, with which it is environed, form, I own, a beautiful proſpect. But, perhaps, the ſtriking contraſt, between this little vale and the horrid country round it, contributes moſt to pleaſe the eye of the wearied traveller.

About fifteen miles from Tan-y-bwlch is the town of Bala. Its name is deſcriptive of its ſituation, being upon the banks of a fine lake, three miles long and one broad. It is famous for a peculiar ſpecies of whiting, called GWINNIAD. This lake in Welſh is called, LLYN-TEGID, i. e. the fine pool; Teg, ſignifying fair or fine in that language. In Engliſh it is called, Pimblemere. Giraldus Cambrenſis, in his Itinerary, ſays, that the wind is always very high, and that it never runs on this lake. Credat qui vult.

About

About fifteen miles diſtant from Bala is the town of Dolgelle, the metropolis of this rugged county. It is a very irregular, and badly-built town, at the foot of a very high mountain, called Cader-ydris*. The country round Dolgelle is romantic and pleaſing; but the town is one of the moſt diſagreeable places I ever ſaw.

In my next expect ſome account of the people who inhabit this ſtrange county.

I am, Sir, &c.

* Cader-ydris, ſignifies the chair or ſeat of Ydris. This Ydris, according to the vulgar tradition, was a giant who lived in this country.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

DEAR SIR,

THE inhabitants of this county are more purely Britiſh, than thoſe of any other part of Wales. Like the clans of Scotland, or Hebrew tribes, they ſcarce ever intermarry, except with thoſe of their own lineage. Through the whole county, they are all couſins, all of the ſame Welſh blood, and moſt of them of the ſame names.

If you would aſk them, how they ſpend their lives in this part of the world; they have it in their power to anſwer you in a few words; We drink, dance, and are merry. Indeed, I do not know a people ſo much addicted

addicted to mirth. The complexion of their country, one would imagine, could not inſpire ſuch ſentiments of feſtivity and joy. They ſing, dance, and drink, not by hours, but by days and weeks; and meaſure time only by the continuance of their mirth and pleaſure.

The men eſtimate their ſtrength not by feats of activity, as in other places, but by the quantities of ale they can drink; and, I am told, it is no uncommon thing for a lover to boaſt to his miſtreſs, what feats he has performed in this way. Such is the mark of proweſs, by which the women judge of their paramour's vigor and ſtrength of conſtitution.

From hence we may conclude that Bacchus does more execution in this country, than Mars does in Germany. Such, whoſe happy poverty preclude them from procuring thoſe liquors, which are the deſtruction of the more opulent, live to an advanced age. Whilſt moſt of the gentry and ſquires, are carried off in their youth; thus the heir does not long

long wait for the poſſeſſion of his eſtate, nor does he long enjoy it. This vice is hereditary in families, and deſcends from father to ſon.

Uno avulſo non deficit alter
——— et ſimili frondeſcit virga metallo.

The feſcennine licence, is here enjoyed in its moſt unbounded extent. In converſation they take the utmoſt freedom and liberty with each other, which is generally borne in good part. They are always endeavoring to frame ruſtic jokes, not always the moſt delicate. Happy does he eſteem himſelf, who comes off conqueror in this certamen of ruſtic wit.

Unembarraſſed with the pedantry of learning, and the diſguſting forms of politeneſs, the good people of Merionydd are free, hoſpitable, and chearful. Let them enjoy their mirth unrivalled, undiſturbed by foreigners, in ſecurity and eaſe. They always will remain unenvied in the participation of that

happineſs, which none but a native of that country can feel.

The Welſh language is here ſpoken with the greateſt claſſical purity. Here they boaſt of their Welſh bards *, who are poets by nature. Theſe bards are idle fellows, who ſubſiſt on the bounty of the Welſh gentry. They, and their allieſmen the harpers, who form a very numerous corps, are generally invited to entertain the company at their feaſts, which is done by buffoonery and illiberal abuſive extempore rhyme. Sometimes a bard comes to the door, and demands admittance in rhyme; he is anſwered by the bard within, in rhyme likewiſe; if the ſtranger, in the opinion of the company, gains the victory in this poetical conteſt; he is admitted to partake of the feaſt, while the vanquiſhed bard is turned out to the former's uncomfortable ſituation.

Somewhat ſimilar to this was the great feaſt which was made in South-Wales, where

* The Welſh word is Bardd.

bards

bards from various parts were invited to a poetical combat, and where it is ſaid the North-Wales poets gained the victory.

This vagabond poetical tribe, were formerly a great nuiſance in this country, and we find divers acts of parliament and regulations made to ſuppreſs them. It is ſaid that Edward I. cruelly deſtroyed them, it may be doubted whether it was not the greateſt benefit he could do to the country. In Henry IV ths time it was enacted, that, "No weſtours, rymours, minſtrels, or other vagabonds, ſhould go about pur faire Kymortha ou coilage." The learned author of the obſervations on the ancient ſtatutes, has miſtaken the meaning of the word Kymortha, or rather Cymortha (the C in Welſh having the ſound of the Engliſh K) it ſignifying a charitable aid or ſupport. This is the ſignification it has in the act of 26 Henry VIII. where it is enacted, that, "No one without licence of the commiſſioners, ſhall Kymortha under color of marrying, ſinging firſt maſſes, &c."

Cymortha, is a word frequently uſed in Wales at this time. A poor new-married couple often go about the country to get ſomething to begin the world, as they call it. Upon theſe occaſions, they have generally wool and corn given them, which they call Cymortha; and, if I am not miſinformed, the briefs that are read in churches, for the relief of the poor, are likewiſe called Cymortha. You will excuſe this criticiſm on the meaning of this word, and believe me to be,

Yours, &c.

LETTER XIV.

DEAR SIR,

IN proportion as a people increaſe in trade, in luxury, in all the arts of ſocial and commercial life, their language becomes more copious and refined. The wants of mankind in an infant ſtate of ſociety are few, their ideas are few, and conſequently the ſounds expreſſive of ſuch ideas. At firſt capable only of ſimple apprehenſion, we by degrees form complex and abſtract ideas. The language of ſocieties is not formed in a day. It is the work of ages; words are daily borrowed, transformed, according to the preſent exigency; and coined, when neceſſity requires,

which the common conſent of mankind alone can render current.

As this people have made no very conſiderable progreſs in a ſtate of civilization, we might naturally be induced to think that their language is barbarous and uncultivated; but the contrary is true. It is not clogged with thoſe many inharmonious monoſyllables, the ſigns of moods, tenſes, and caſes, as the Engliſh language. It is much more harmonious and expreſſive in its numbers and formation; one word in Welſh frequently expreſſing as much as a ſentence in the Engliſh; of which a late ingenious writer has given abundant ſpecimens.

Though this is the language of a people, who inhabit a ſmall barren ſpot of earth, ſcarce known in the world; unimproved in the arts of life, entirely neglected and uncultivated; and not ſpoken, except by ſuch who willingly forfeit every claim to politeneſs; yet its variety, copiouſneſs, and even harmony, is to be equalled by few, perhaps excelled by none.

But our wonder ceaſes, when we conſider that it is not ſolely the language of a people confined in a little corner of this iſland. It is the language of populous and even civilized nations, the antient Celts. Hence its variety and its harmony. It is the language of a brave people. Hence thoſe ſounds that rouſed the ſoul to action. Animated by theſe, they deſpiſed danger and death for their country.

Thus ſome account for the policy of Edward I. who in order to enſlave the people, thought it a neceſſary previous ſtep to deſtroy the bards, who cultivated their language and poetry.

This language ſeems to be more particularly adapted for poetry; which, however extraordinary it may ſeem to ſome, on account of the multiplicity of gutturals and conſonants with which it abounds, has the ſoftneſs and harmony of the Italian, with the majeſty and expreſſion of the Greek. In the formation of its poetical numbers, it differs from all modern languages. Every line con-

ſiſts of a certain regular number of feet, like other languages; but herein it differs, that it has a certain kind of rhyme*, jingle, or alliteration, not that terminates the line, but runs through every part of it.

The poets, or ſuch as pretend to be ſuch, arrogate to themſelves a moſt unwarrantable poetical licence of coining words, for the ſake of ſound; and this they will ſeldom ſcruple to do, whenever they want a word for rhyme. Hence the greateſt part of their poetry, is nothing more than melodious non-

* Giraldus Cambrenſis, to ſhew the nature of Welſh poetry, quotes the following pentameter,

Factus es O pulcher pæne puella puer.

The following latin hexameter of Cicero, with the tranſlation by Dryden, may with as much propriety be adduced to the ſame purpoſe,

O fortunatam natam me conſule Romam.

Fortune, fortuned the dying note of Rome,
'Till I her conſul's ſoul conſoled her doom.

ſenſe,

ſenſe, a perfect jargon of harmonious ſounds. And when tranſlated, ſcarce reducible to common ſenſe. This unbounded poetical licence, though generally, yet, is not univerſally adopted. For there are not wanting many poets, who ſeldom claim this unwarrantable prerogative of coining words ad libitum.

Theſe obſervations, that I have made on the Welſh language, are the reſult of a converſation I have had with ſuch as are well acquainted with the ſubject. Much more might have been added. But for a more critical knowledge of it, I refer you to a late accurate and ingenious publication *. I am, Sir,

Yours, &c.

N. B. I have ſent you incloſed for your amuſement ſome tranſlations from the old Welſh bards, by my friend the curate.

* Vide, Hiſtorical and Critical Remarks on the Welſh language.

A FRAG-

A FRAGMENT OF A WELSH POEM,

By MIRIAN GOCH* of ERYRI.

Tranſlated.

WAS it Hunlech†, the valiant ſon of Tyndaethwy, the great ſhield of Cymry, fiercer than a lioneſs robbed of her whelps? It was he the great terror of the Saxons, who conſumed the deſcendants of Offa, as the fiery meteor conſumeth the ſtubble, or as the northern blaſt deſtroyeth the leaves in the foreſt of Buelt. It was the hare-footed deſcendant of Cynan, who was ſwifter than the eagle-eyed hawk, that perches on the ſummit of

* Mirvan Goch, ſignifies the red-haired Mirvan. It is uſual for all the Welſh bards to aſſume an epithet deſcriptive of their perſons. This fragment I am told was accidentally found in the ruins of an old monaſtery.

† Some conjecture that Harlech-caſtle had its name from this hero.

Moel-

Moel-Hebog*. His courſe was like the rapid ſtream of Ogwen, that burſts through the craggy rocks of Eryri†. It deluged the Saxon hoſt with a torrent of blood.

As the hot thunderbolts of heaven, diſſolve the flakes of ſnow on the mountains of Wyddfa‡, ſo melted the hearts of the Saxon army before the fiery wrath of Hurlech. As the horned inhabitants of the rocky cliffs, fly from the loud mouthed horn of the hunter, ſo fled the enemy from the thundering voice of the Britiſh chief.

Let the ten-ſtringed harp of Merlin ſound to the praiſes of Hurlech! Let Echo celebrate his praiſes, through the rocky caverns of Eryri, who defended his country from the wide-ſlaying ſword of Henry, drenched in Cambrian blood.

* Moel-Hebog, the hawk's mountain, is a high mountain near Snowdon.

† Eryri, comprehends all the Carnarvonſhire mountains.

‡ Wyddfa, is the Welſh name for the mountain of Snowdon.

Reſt

Reſt Cymry from the fell deſtruction of rapine and war. While Hurlech liveth, the glory of the armies of Gwynedd*, Deheubarth and Mathrafal; no more ſhalt thou ſee the bloody Saxons, cutting down with their fiery ſwords the ſons of Brutus, as the reaper cutteth the blades of corn. The hoſt of Lloegr† ſhall fly from the banks of Hafren‡ nor come within the lightning of Hurlech's wrath, as the timid dove flieth from the keen-eyed eagle — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —

* Gwynedd, ſignifies North-Wales; Deheubarth, South-Wales; and Mathrafal, Powis-Land.

† Lloegr, England.

‡ Hafren, the Severn.

ANOTHER

ANOTHER FRAGMENT,

By an unknown Author.

FAIR and fragrant are the bloſſoms of ſummer, which grow on the flowery banks of Hafren; bright ſhineth the ſun after the clouds and tempeſts are diſpelled; fairer and brighter is the beauteous ſhining branch of Llewelin, the ſnow-coloured Gwendolen.

Her fair form animated the warriors on the marſh* of Rhyddlan, when the heroes of Lloegr breathed deſtruction on the valiant ſons of Cymry. Then fell the brave, the valiant ſon of Gryffydd, by the ruffian hands of the bloody Saxon, in the ſight of his beloved Gwendolen.

* Morfa Rhyddlan, where the Welſh received a terrible overthrow. They call one of their moſt plaintive and melancholy tunes by this name, to which this elegiac ſong is ſet to muſic.

The

The fair wept for the fall of her beloved hero, ſhe kiſſed his clay-cold corſe, but the purple flood of life was gone — — —

— — — — — — — — —

O ye fair maids of Cymry, bemoan in plaintive ſongs the fall of the beloved chief; and ye blooming youths, the deſcendants of the brave Cadwallader, lament the fair Gwendolen, for ſhe ſurvived not her lover — —

LETTER XV.

DEAR SIR,

THE internal strength, riches, and populousness of a country, depend in a great degree, upon the cultivation of the land. The adventitious wealth and power, acquired by commerce, may flow in another channel, and revolt from one nation to another. Carthage and Tyre, have in ancient times, and Venice in more modern, been the emporiums of commerce. These she has deserted, and has taken her seat in more northern climes, where her abode is precarious, as in her former dominions. But the advantages resulting from agriculture are permanent;

nent; uncontroulable by fortuitous circumſtances, they depend alone upon the induſtry of man. So kind and juſt is nature, that ſhe rewards the huſbandman, in proportion to his care and toil.

In the great empire of China, the richeſt and moſt populous in the world, the land is cultivated to the very ſummit of the mountains. Earth is carried from the vallies to cover the barren rocks, which are converted to fruitful gardens. Were China not thus improved, could it maintain thoſe millions of inhabitants, who are employed in procuring ſubſiſtence for themſelves and others.

Agriculture has been ever eſteemed honorable among all great and wiſe nations. The Romans took their greateſt generals from the plough, to command their conquering armies. And the great emperor of China, who has perhaps more ſubjects, than there are inhabitants in Europe, thinks it not unbecoming him to hold the plough, thereby ſhewing an example worthy of his ſubjects imitation.

Why

Why ſhould we ſend colonies to cut down the vaſt foreſts of America, when we have ſo much unimproved land in this kingdom? How many uncultivated heaths, parks, foreſts, marſhes, and commons are there, profitable neither to their proprietors, or the public? If our lands were properly cultivated the produce would be greatly increaſed, and conſequently the ſtrength, riches, and population of the kingdom, would be proportionably augmented.

Several counties of Wales have made but a very ſlow progreſs in agriculture. In many places bordering upon England, they have in a great degree adopted the Engliſh manner of tillage. In ſome parts of the counties of Montgomery, Denbigh and Flint, the lands are well improved. I have made this obſervation, that the remoter they are from the Engliſh counties, the leſs is there of the ſpirit of induſtry and improvment among the inhabitants.

In the county of Merionydd, they have very little good land, and they make ſo bad

an uſe of that, which nature has given them with ſo ſparing a hand, that ſome might be ready to conclude that they prefer their barren rocks to the moſt fertile ſoil. In ſome places between the mountains, there are to be ſeen a few acres of good land, where the earth has been waſhed away from the hills. The water generally ſtagnates in theſe places, and they never take the trouble of draining them, but cut them in turbaries for fewel. Thus in a few years, they totally ruin their fineſt meadow land. The greateſt part of the country conſiſts of barren mountains, incapable of improvment. They ſerve, however, to ſubſiſt a great abundance of ſheep. With the wool they make conſiderable quantities of flannel, which they export. This is the ſtaple manufacture and ſupport of the county.

A conſiderable part of Carnarvonſhire and the iſland of Angleſea, is naturally a very good ſoil, but very much unimproved. What they principally want, are good fences and ſhelter for their cattle. The only incloſures

that

that they have, are ſmall banks of earth or turf-mounds thrown up. Theſe continue but a very little time, as the cattle deſtroy them in the winter, and the farmer is at a conſiderable expence in repairing them every ſpring. In ſuch places as are expoſed to the ſea winds, the trees will not grow to any height; and all kinds of quickſets are long in their growth. So that the gentlemen and farmers ſeldom judge it worth the trouble and expence to plant. But ſatisfied I am that in a few years it would anſwer; and nothing would contribute more to the improvment of the country, than if ſuch a practice was generally adopted.

There are extenſive fens undrained, and the greateſt part of the country conſiſts of nothing but furze. The beſt land lets in general from three to five ſhillings an acre; the price of labor about ſix-pence a day. There is great plenty of manure eaſily to be had, and notwithſtanding theſe advantages, the country is unimproved. How ſhall we account for this? There is a certain ſupineneſs

in the greateſt part of country gentlemen, which renders them inattentive even to their own good. They live upon their eſtates, unſolicitous of what paſſes in life, and provided they enjoy the dull comforts of an animal exiſtence, they are ſatisfied. Undiſturbed with the ſpirit of enterpriſe and ambition, they follow the dull track of their anceſtors, without thought, and without reflexion, and live and die unknown.

The farmers and laborers are moſt of them miſerably poor, they hold the lands generally from year to year at rack-rent. If one more induſtrious than the reſt, ſhould make any improvment, the landlord advances his rent, or turns him out. Thus it is the intereſt of the farmer to let them lie waſte, as he has no certainty of a return, when he is liable to be turned out at the landlord's pleaſure. Thus they only take care to get juſt ſufficient by their induſtry to ſupply preſent want, and let the morrow provide for itſelf.

Nothing would contribute more to the cultivation of the country, than the granting

of

of leaſes for life to the farmers, even at advanced rents. Then they would have a certain proſpect of profit for their labor and expence; which would ultimately turn out to the benefit of the landlord, the tenant, and the public.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XVI.

DEAR SIR,

FROM Merionythſhire, the moſt barren and deſolate part of Wales, we came to Montgomeryſhire, which in many parts far exceeds any county of North-Wales, for fertility and richneſs of ſoil. The Welſh name is Tre-Faldwyn; the Engliſh Montgomery is derived from Sir Roger de Montgomery, a Norman baron, who had a grant of a great part of this country.

* Tre-Faldwyn, is probably a corruption of Tre-Baldwyn, i. e. Baldwyn's town; we are told by hiſtorians that Montgomery was called, before it was taken by Sir Roger de Montgomery, the town and caſtle of Baldwyn. Who this Baldwyn was, I do not find recorded.

Mont-

Montgomery is but a very ſmall town, thinly inhabited. There are to be ſeen the remains of a caſtle, which was built in the time of William Rufus; in order moſt probably to ſecure the colony of Normans, who were ſent here to ſubdue the Welſh, under the command of Sir Roger de Montgomery. The caſtle is guarded by a craggy precipice on one ſide, and a deep foſſe on the other.

The town of Welſh-pool is the moſt conſiderable in the whole country. It is regular, well built, and ſuperior to moſt Welſh towns. About a mile from Pool is Powis-caſtle, the ſeat of lord Powis, it is ſituated on a fine hill, which commands a proſpect of an extenſive, variegated, and fertile country. The vale of Montgomery, which we ſee from the caſtle, is not equalled by any in point of fertility and beauty in Wales, nor perhaps in England. The Severn winds its ſerpentine courſe thro' this vale, and heightens the beauties of the proſpect. On each ſide the vale, the hills tower in majeſty and grandeur. I do not

heſitate to prefer this ſituation and proſpect, to that of the vale of Clwyd. Some even venture to affirm that it is not equalled by any in Great-Britain.

The caſtle of Powis, and the fine gardens, are much neglected and decayed, as his lordſhip does not reſide here.

The hills and mountains in this county are covered with verdure to their very ſummit, being a perfect contraſt to thoſe in the counties before deſcribed, where we ſaw nothing but craggy rocks, and dreadful precipices.

From Pool, we continued our journey through pretey fertile country, between the confines of England and Wales to Oſweſtry. In Welſh it is called CROES-OSWOLT, i. e. Oſwald's-croſs. This was formerly eſteemed part of Wales, but now it is included in Shropſhire. It is remarkable that the Welſh language is ſpoken in many parts of Shropſhire, while it is almoſt entirely loſt in Montgomeryſhire.

From

From Oſweſtry, we viſited Chirk-caſtle, the ſeat of Mr. Middleton. It has a magnificent appearance at a diſtance, but it is an ill-contrived houſe in every point of view. The country round it is pleaſant, but upon the whole, it is not an agreeable ſituation.

A few miles from Chirk-caſtle, is the village of Llangollen, in a bottom, ſurrounded on every ſide with high hills. The village is remarkable for nothing but a fine bridge, eſteemed one of the curioſities of Wales. The caſtle of Dinas-bran, is on the ſummit of one of the hills, above the village. This caſtle belonged formerly to the princes of Powis-land *. Dinas-bran, is I apprehend a corruption of DINAS-BRENING, i. e. the reſidence of the king. The hill upon which the caſtle

* Powis, or Mathrafal, as it is called in Welſh, before king Offa's time, reached eaſtward to the rivers Severn and Dee, from Broxen-hills to Salop. By the dyke it was contracted into a narrower compaſs. The plain country towards Salop, being inhabited by Saxons and Normans. The length was North-eaſt from Pulford to Llangirric-bridge, near Cardiganſhire, the breadth from Cefeilion to Elleſmere.

ſtands,

ſtands, is very high and ſteep, and muſt have been an almoſt inacceſſible place. It has the appearance of great antiquity, being probably built by ſome of the firſt Britiſh princes.

In our way to Wrexham, our curioſity induced us to view Wynnſtay, the ſeat of Sir Watkin Williams Wynne. The houſe is incompleat in its ſtructure, but the beauty of the ſituation exceeds deſcription.

The laſt place that we viſited in North-Wales was Wrexham, which is the richeſt and moſt populous town in the whole country. The only curioſity that travellers remark in it is a fine ſteeple, which is eſteemed one of the wonders of Wales.

The inhabitants of this place are ſo perfectly Engliſhed, if I may uſe ſuch an expreſſion, in their language, manners, and cuſtoms, that it bears no reſemblance to the generality of Welſh towns.

I have now finiſhed my deſcription of the face of the country, and conclude, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE taken up my pen, with the view of making ſome obſervations on the ancient and modern legal polity of the Welſh.

Laws in every ſtate, are multiplied in proportion to the opulence, the number, the trade, and the intercourſe of the inhabitants. Twelve tables contained the laws of Rome, when in its infant ſtate; and the decalogue, was the foundation of the Jewiſh juriſprudence. The laws of opulent and commercial countries, ſuch as England and China, are incredibly voluminous; whilſt thoſe of barbarous and uncivilized nations, may be comprized in a ſhort compaſs.

A le-

A legiſlator cannot form a code of laws, that will ſerve the ſtate in all exigencies, through ſucceeding generations. Human foreſight cannot comprehend events that may happen; nor if foreſeen, could it provide againſt them. The ingenuity of man eludes every tie that is made to bind it. Hence new caſes daily happen, which were never foreſeen; and new miſchiefs, againſt which the law has no guard; which muſt be remedied by new laws, ex re nata. Thus they become ſo multifarious, that it muſt be the employment of a life to acquire a knowledge of them.

Happy is that country of which it may be ſaid, (as Tacitus* does in his admirable picture of the Germans) Plus ibi boni mores quam alibi bonæ leges valent. Were mankind virtuous and juſt, there would be no forenſic

* I never conſidered Tacitus's treatiſe, De moribus Germanorum, intended as a real deſcription of the Germans—He drew the picture of a people, in manners perfectly contraſted to the Romans, thereby aiming an oblique ſatire againſt his countrymen.

liti-

litigations; no occaſion for the coif and long robe. Avarice and injuſtice are the offspring of riches, luxury, and vice; theſe introduced a neceſſary reſtraint upon human actions, which we call LAW.

In very early ages, before Chriſtianity was planted in Europe, the prieſts or druids were judges and legiſlators among the Celtic nations. They decided in all controverſies, both of a public and private nature. References being at firſt probably made to them, on account of their ſanctity, and auſterity of manners; which gave ſanction and weight to their deciſions. We have the concurrent teſtimony * of credible hiſtorians, that this

* Neque animadvertere, neque vincire, neque verberare, quidem niſi ſacerdotibus permiſſum—Tacitus de m. Germ. Fere de omnibus controverſiis publicis privatiſque conſtituunt, et ſi quod eſt admiſſum facinus, ſi cædes facta, ſi de hereditate, ſi de finibus controverſia, iidem decernunt præmia pœnaſque conſtituunt. Si quis privatus aut publicus eorum decreto non obedierit ſacrificiis interdicunt. Hæc pœna apud eos graviſſima. Quibus ita eſt interdictum impiorum habentur numero. Cæſar de bello Gallico.

was

was the caſe among the Germans and Gauls. And I think, there is little doubt, but the ancient Britons were a branch of the ſame people. A great ſimiliarity may be traced in their manners, cuſtoms and language.

In ſo early a ſtate of ſociety, when they had no riches, nor ſcarce an idea of diſtinct property, there could be but few cauſes of altercation and animoſity. Their laws conſiſted of a few oral and traditional precepts, not reduced to writing, but committed only to the memory.

The breaſt of the druid was the repoſitory of their laws. The court of judicature was ſituated on the moſt conſpicuous eminence, in the open air. Here the cauſes were tried, and judgment pronounced. The remains of many of theſe judgment ſeats I have ſeen, which are ſtill called by that name in the Welſh language ORSEDDE. I ſhall here give a ſhort deſcription of their ancient courts of judicature, with an account of their manner of proceeding, which may not prove unentertaining.

Their

Their ſeats of judgment or juridical courts conſiſted of two circumvallations of a circular form, one comprehended within the other. The centre was raiſed, and ſeems to have been the place where the judge ſat. The inner circumvallation was intended for the parties and witneſſes, and the outer for the multitude.

In early times, as I have before obſerved, the druids were the only judges. But after the planting of Chriſtianity, and the people being ſomewhat more civilized, the laws which were before merely oral became reduced into writing, and a regular code was formed by Howel Dha, or the good. We find at that time, that all matters of inheritance, were determined by the prince in perſon; if not able to attend, by his deputy. The court conſiſted of the freeholders of the place, two elders, the chief judge, and the ordinary judge of the court. The prince ſat above, with an elder on each hand. The freeholders next, who then were and are ſtill

called

called by the name of Uchelwyr.* Below, the chief juſtice, the prieſt ſat on the right hand, and the ordinary judge on the left.

The plaintiff, with his advocate (Rhyngill, wrangler, or if you will ſerjeant) and champion† on the left ſide; and the defendant, with his advocate and champion on the right. The witneſſes were placed at the lower end.

For what purpoſe the freeholders were preſent in court, is not clear. It does not appear that they were called in to act as a jury. Though it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe ſo; as the trial by jury was uſed among all the Gothic nations. The chief, the common judge, and prieſt gave judgment; but in matters of difficulty and importance, the definitive ſentence was pronounced by the prince, with the advice and aſſiſtance of the elders.

* Uchelwyr ſignifies high-men, or men in high ſtation.

† By this it appears that in ſome caſes, trial by battle was in uſe among the ancient Britons, as it was among all the Northern nations.

In

In the formation of Howel Dha's code, many of the Saxon laws ſeem to have been adopted. The reſt are perhaps only traditional cuſtoms, reduced into writing. They deſcend to take notice of even the minuteſt circumſtances, and are perhaps the beſt proof of the uncultivated and barbarous diſpoſition of the inhabitants. To produce inſtances to corroborate what I have aſſerted, would be needleſs; for the whole code is probably the ſtrangeſt collection of juriſprudence that ever was compoſed for the government of any people.

Hiſtorians * aſſert, that the ancient inhabitants of Wales were of ſuch an inflexible refractory diſpoſition, that they would hardly ſubmit to any law. The whole face of the country diſcovered more the ſigns of anarchy, than the police of a well regulated government. Not only the princes of the di-

* This was likewiſe very much the caſe in England at that time, for we find the barons waging war againſt each other without the royal aſſent.

vided parts of Wales, but even private perſons, waged open public hoſtilities againſt each other. Encroachments on each others eſtates, family quarrels, and affronts, furniſhed ample pretexts for taking arms. So ſtrong were their paſſions, and ſo weak was law.

The cuſtom of gavelkind contributed in a great degree to promote theſe hereditary feuds. Sovereignties, as well as the eſtates of private perſons, were divided among all the male iſſue, legitimate, as well as illegitimate. This was the perpetual ſource of civil wars and private diſſentions. Upon the death of the prince, all the ſons claimed a right to the ſovereignty; and, as among the Aſiatic nations, the longeſt ſword eſtabliſhed the claim. Sometimes they agreed to divide the ſovereignty between the ſons. Nothing could tend more to weaken the country, and render them unable to repel foreign incurſions, than the cuſtom of gavelkind, when applied to the government.

The

The equal partition of private eſtates amongſt the male iſſue, tends to promote population and cultivation of the land. In a government founded on equality and liberty, it is the means of curtailing the wealth and power of individuals, and reducing mankind more to a ſtate of natural equality. By nature all the iſſue female, as well as male, have certainly a right to an equal ſhare of their anceſtor's property. The preference given to the eldeſt is artificial, introduced by law, and not by nature. The cuſtom of lands deſcending to the youngeſt ſon, which we call borough-Engliſh, in preference to the other ſons, ſeems to have a ſtronger foundation in reaſon, than the excluſive deſcendibility to the eldeſt; or, as it is called, the right of primogeniture; the eldeſt being ſuppoſed more capable of providing for himſelf, on account of his more advanced age, than the youngeſt; who probably might be of ſuch tender years, as to be altogether unable to provide for himſelf, on his anceſtor's deceaſe.

This law of gavelkind was univerſal, in Great-Britain, before the Norman conqueſt; and remained in Wales, till the time of Henry VIII. when the union commenced.

There is the ſtrongeſt reaſon to think, that the feudal ſyſtem never was adopted in Wales. There are no traces of it remaining, that I could diſcover. In the three moſt northern counties they have no manors, nor manerial courts or rights; nor any copyhold tenures, or the leaſt remains of any of the conſequences of feudal tenures.

In the counties bordering upon England, as I have before obſerved, ſome of the kings of the Norman line made large grants of lands, in order to keep the Welſh in ſubjection. In theſe territories, which they had by grant from the crown, they held courts; which are ſtill kept by preſcription. Here, indeed, there are ſome appearances of the feudal ſyſtem; but it muſt be remembered, that even theſe few veſtiges are the remains of the Norman policy, and make no part of the ancient Britiſh conſtitution.

We

We may, therefore, conclude with certainty that the feudal ſyſtem was never adopted among the ancient Britons, or Welſh; and was probably never known in this iſland, until the Norman conqueſt.

The princes of Wales had a legiſlative power. We do not find that they had any kind of parliament. They could alter, abrogate and enact laws without advice, according to their own will and pleaſure. In the exerciſe of this power, it was their intereſt to act conformably to the public good; for if they diſpleaſed their ſubjects, their diſapprobation was ſhewn not by vain ineffectual PETITIONS, but by the ſword. Petition is a word coined among ſlaves, unknown to the ancient Britons. In this country, as it ought to be in every other; WHEN THE SOVEREIGN CEASED TO BE DESERVING OF HIS CROWN, HE CEASED TO BE A KING.

LETTER XVIII.

MY laſt letter, Sir, contained ſome remarks on the laws and conſtitution of the principality of Wales, before its reduction by Edward I. I propoſe now to continue the ſubject, and to make a few obſervations on the execution of the laws, and the preſent mode of adminiſtering juſtice.

When Edward I. had brought Wales into ſubjection to the crown of England; his next care was to regulate the laws and judicial proceedings. With this view he directed a commiſſion * to the biſhop of St. Davids, and others, to make an enquiry into the old

* Vid. Appendix to Howel Dha's Laws.

laws

laws and cuſtoms that prevailed in Wales. By the ſtatute of Rhyddlan *, ſome of theſe cuſtoms are retained, and ſome entirely abrogated.

It appears that the ſheriffs in thoſe times exerciſed a far greater power than they now do. They kept a priſon in their own houſes, where they confined ſuch as they thought proper. In many counties, the ſheriffs were before the time of Edward VI. for life; and not from year to year, as at preſent.

Many and ſevere laws were enacted againſt the Welſh in the times of Henry IV. and V. on account of the rebellion of Glendower, and the depradations that they ſometimes committed on the borders of England.

No one that ſpoke the Welſh language, could enjoy any place of profit or office, except a biſhopric, in Wales. Nor could a Welſhman have any caſtle or houſe of defence; and if an Engliſhman married a Welſh-

* 12 Edward I.

woman, he was thereby rendered incapable of enjoying any office.

In the time of Henry IV. a moſt excellent regulation was made to prevent idle rhymers, minſtrals and vagabonds, from going about the country begging. This has been looked upon by ſome to be a ſevere law, and a grievance to the country; but the leaſt reflection will convince them, that it was a moſt wholſome regulation.

In the time of Henry VIII. the act of union of England and Wales, and ordinances paſſed for the adminiſtration of juſtice in the principality. Some authors of great learning have (I ſpeak with deference to ſo great authority) I think, very improperly called this act a complete Code of Regulations for the Adminiſtration of Juſtice. Whoever will give himſelf the trouble of conſidering, with the leaſt degree of attention, the mode of judicial proceedings in Wales, compared to that in England, muſt immediately acknowledge the great ſuperiority of the latter.

It is true, they have in Wales what is very improperly called the court of grand ſeſſions. Here is tranſacted both chancery and common law buſineſs. In one of my excurſions, I happened accidentally to be preſent at their courts. I requeſted ſome information concerning their proceedings of a gentleman who ſat next me; who ſatisfied my curioſity in the following terms. "The import of your queſtion, Sir, ſaid he, denotes you to be a ſtranger; and I am glad it is in my power to give you the information you require. You have heard, the judge make a very elaborate ſpeech to the jury; but not one of them are capable of comprehending the meaning of a ſyllable of it. All our common people are ignorant of the Engliſh language; and we are never allowed ſpecial juries to try cauſes in Wales. Where the cauſe of action is above ten pounds, the parties may bring it to trial to the next Engliſh county. Thus are we frequently obliged, at great expence and trouble, to bring witneſſes at a hundred miles diſtance to try a

trifling cauſe; and the more opulent have it always in their power to harraſs one who is leſs able to bear the expence. By this means what was originally intended as a benefit to the country, is become a grievance. And as the reaſon for trying cauſes in the next Engliſh county has ceaſed, which was to procure a more impartial trial, on account of the party faction which generally prevailed in Wales, ſo ought the practice to ceaſe likewiſe. The ſame judicial proceedings ought to take place here as in England; and it would be more beneficial for the country, if Wales was joined to the Engliſh circuits. Thus there would be no partial diſtinction between the inhabitants of England and Wales. We ſhould have the ſame laws, the ſame juſtice, the ſame government, and in time, the ſame language."

Thus concluded my new acquaintance the account he gave me; and, though a ſtranger to the ſubject, I thought the information I received was not altogether unreaſonable.

The

The judge, when he had finiſhed his harangue, nodded on the bench. The jury laid their heads together, to determine a matter of which they were totally ignorant; and I departed, ruminating upon what I had ſeen and heard, and upon the ſupineneſs of thoſe who ſuffer the country to labor under a grievance eaſily remedied.

Adieu, Sir, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

DEAR SIR,

DURING my continuance in this country, I have had the curioſity to enquire into their police, and the execution of the law. Great is the diſcontent of the moſt ſenſible part of the inhabitants, on account of the defective enforcement of the law. Crimes of the blackeſt dye, frequently paſs unobſerved; or if obſerved, unpuniſhed. Some might infer a concluſion from hence, that the laws of England do not extend to this rugged ſpot, or that the inhabitants are too refractory to be governed by law. The former is not the caſe, whatever foundation there may be for the latter.

It

It may be ſaid in general, that the law is very defectively enforced in Wales; and ſome laws have never been adopted, if I may uſe the expreſſion, into that country. In the three moſt northern counties, the laws reſpecting the game, and thoſe reſpecting the ſettlement and maintenance of the poor, have never been put into execution.

The game laws are reſtrictive of the natural rights of mankind, and made for the benefit of a few individuals, diſtinguiſhed by the favors of fortune. Thoſe for whoſe advantage they were enacted, have alone a right to enforce them, and they have a right likewiſe to diſpenſe with the execution of their own excluſive privileges. Let them enjoy the praiſe they deſerve for ſo meritorious and diſintereſted a conduct.

The laws relating to the poor, are far from being included under the ſame predicament. By not enforcing them, they do not diſpenſe with their own privileges, but abrogate the rights of others, the moſt helpleſs part of mankind. It is an advantage enjoyed in ſociety

ciety, that every individual, who by accident or ſickneſs is rendered incapable of maintaining himſelf, has a right to a proviſion at the public expence. The rights of humanity demand a ſupport for the poor, the laws of this country have provided it; and the neglect of enforcing them, is a ſhocking breach of every obligation, legal, moral, and religious.

Let not theſe ſtrangers to the rights of humanity, as well as the laws of their country, argue that the hand of charity is munificently extended to relieve diſtreſs; but the diſtreſſed have not always the ability to undergo the fatigues of a mendicant erratic life. It is not in the power of one, depreſſed with the heavy burden of fourſcore years, to wander a deſolate country to ſeek exiſtence. When he hath ſpent his youthful morning and noon, in labor and the ſervice of ſociety, ſome ſupport is due to him, in the evening of life. It is ſaid, that inſtances are not wanting of ſome, who periſh through want. Are not their unfortunate ends to be imputed to thoſe, who

who are delegated to enforce the laws. However ſuperficially I may be acquainted with this country, I have reaſon to think that ſo heavy a charge is not deſtitute of foundation.

Is it then for want of charity, that ſuch inſtances happen? no: the hand of charity is not cold. She is ſeldom ſolicited in vain. It is on account of the inability of the object to ſeek relief, and not their unwillingneſs in granting it.

It is by ſome aſſerted, that if the poor were maintained by parochial rates, it would encourage idleneſs, and that many would throw themſelves upon the pariſh, who could maintain themſelves by labor. I would deny this deduction.

Now thoſe alone are capable of receiving the alms of charity, who are able to maintain themſelves. The old, the ſick and decripit, are not able, like the healthy and ſtrong, to ſeek a precarious exiſtence, by roving about the country for ſubſiſtence. The alms given to vagrants, of whom they have

have no knowledge, would more than ſupport ſuch as are really indigent.

If each pariſh or diſtrict was to maintain its own poor, work might be found for ſuch as were capable of working; and it would be more profitable for the farmer to furniſh them with employment, than to maintain them in idleneſs.

Some perhaps may argue, that in many parts of England, great abuſes have crept into the execution of the poor laws, and conclude that therefore they ought not to be enforced in Wales. It cannot be denied, but that the wiſeſt human inſtitution may be perverted. We ought rather to conſider the advantages that may be derived from their proper execution, than the abuſes reſulting from their improper enforcement.

In large populous manufacturing towns and countries, the poor are very numerous. This may be as much owing to their luxurious manner of life, as to the number of inhabitants. In Wales there are comparatively

tively few that ſtand in need of charity; and their number would be greatly diminiſhed, if proper means were uſed to excite induſtry. The lands are uncultivated, the wool unmanufactured. Here would be employment as well for the youth and the aged, as thoſe in the vigor of life; many of whom, to the diſgrace of the country, wander about begging and pilfering. The means perhaps the moſt effectual to provide for the poor, would be to erect a workhouſe in every county for the infirm and aged. Thus would charity be properly and effectually applied, beggary eradicated, and induſtry encouraged.

The care of doing this is incumbent upon thoſe that are delegated to enforce the laws of their country. Were I to addreſs them, it would be to diverſt themſelves of the prejudices they have imbibed. To ſhew by their conduct, that they enjoy their offices, neither for emolument, or gratification of vanity; that their attention is not ſolely confined to the indulgence of their pleaſures, and that

the welfare of their country is at least a secondary consideration.

I have now, Sir, finished all I have to say of this country, except some observations on its history, which shall be the subject of some future letters.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XX.

DEAR SIR,

ALL nations boaſt of their high deſcent and origin. Some have traced their genealogies from heroes and demigods, others from the gods themſelves.

It would be a matter of wonder, if this nation, proverbially remarked for their pedigrees, ſhould not put in an equal claim to antiquity and high deſcent. Accordingly, their hiſtorians affirm with great gravity, that they are deſcended from one Brutus, the ſon of Silvius, ſon of the goddeſs-born, pious Æneas.

Thus you ſee how eaſily they trace their pedigrees from Venus and old father Jupiter.

To prove this genealogy, they ſay, that Brutus and Britains are ſo very ſimilar, that the latter muſt neceſſarily be derived from the former.

Other hiſtorians aſſert, with no leſs confidence, that they are deſcended in a direct line from Gomer, from whom they are called Cymry; thus gratifying their vanity at the expence of their underſtanding.

Let their genealogiſts ſeek for their origin with as little ſucceſs, as they would the fountain of the Nile. It will be ſufficient for us to determine that they are a branch of the ancient Celts. This is evident to demonſtration, from their manners, cuſtoms, and language.

It is probable that they emigrated in colonies from the continent to ſeek ſettlements; and were the only inhabitants of this iſland, till they were firſt conquered by the Romans, afterwards by the Saxons, when they were obliged to take refuge in the moſt remote and inacceſſible parts of the country. It is probable, from the Celtic words now in com-

mon uſe in thoſe counties, that many of them continued to reſide in Cornwal, and the north of England, long after the Saxon conqueſt. But they have for ſome ages been incorporated with the Engliſh, ſo that ſcarce any veſtiges can be traced of their different origin. In Wales they have had but little intercourſe with foreigners, by which means they ſtill continue a diſtinct people.

A minute detail of all the wars and depredations of the Welſh and Engliſh, from the æra of the Saxon conqueſt to the time of Edward I. would be as unimportant as thoſe of the different tribes of Indians. Their wars were equally bloody, and both nations in thoſe times were as ſavage and ferocious. Each, as the ſcale of fortune preponderated, filled the others territories with maſſacres and devaſtation, and deſtroyed with fire and ſword.

Such hiſtories diſgrace the annals of humanity, and had better been left unrecorded.

What I propoſe in this and my next letter, is only to draw the moſt remarkable outlines of the hiſtory of Wales.

Cadwalader was the laſt of the ancient Britiſh kings who reigned in England; being driven out by the Saxons, he took refuge in Armorica, or Little Britain, in France, where a colony of Britains were then ſettled.

From the time of the Saxon invaſion, to Rhyddarch or Roderick the great, as he is called, the Britains had no ſettled government, but were ruled by ſeveral petty kings or lords, of whom nothing very memorable is related. Roderick was king of all Wales, which he divided between his three ſons; North-Wales to his eldeſt, South-Wales to the ſecond, and Powis-land to the third, with an injunction that they ſhould owe allegiance to the eldeſt.

This diviſion of Wales continued not long, for it was again united under Howel Dha, or the good, who was grandſon to Roderick. He is diſtinguiſhed with the eminent title of the good, as he was the great Lycurgus of Wales. The code of laws which he collected for them are ſtill extant, of which I have taken ſome notice in a former letter.

After

After the death of Howel Dha, Wales was again divided into three parts, and continued so to its conqueſt by Edward I. without much interruption. This want of polity in dividing the principality, was the chief ſource of all their misfortunes. Diſtracted by civil commotions, they were unable to repel the attacks of the Danes by ſea, and the Engliſh by land.

During the interval between the time of Howel Dha and Gruffyth ap Llewelyn, we read of nothing very memorable, except inteſtine commotions, and invaſions by the Danes, to whom they were compelled to pay tribute.

Gruffyth ap Llewelyn reduced all Wales under ſubjection to him. He was very ſucceſsful in his wars againſt the Engliſh, in the time of Edward the confeſſor. He is the firſt, if not the only one of the Welſh kings, that had a navy; and is highly celebrated for his power and valour by the Welſh hiſtorians. Harold, the Engliſh general, provoked by the continual incurſions and de-

predations made by Gruffydd in the frontier Engliſh counties, fell upon him unprepared, and obliged him to fly abroad, leaving his country naked and defenceleſs. The enemy conquered the greateſt part of Wales in the abſence of Gruffydd, and left monuments of their victories, with this inſcription, "Hic fuit victor Haraldus." We are told by Giraldus Cambrenſis, that theſe monuments were extant in his time. But as I have before obſerved, the veracity of theſe monkiſh hiſtorians is not always to be credited.

When Gruffydd returned, after this baſe deſertion of his country, they were ſo juſtly irritated at his conduct, that they beheaded him as a traitor, and ſent his head to Harold.

William the conqueror marched with a powerful army into Wales, which ſo intimidated them, that they were kept in ſubjection during the whole of his reign. In the time of the conqueror and William Rufus, many ſettlements were made in Wales by the Normans. A plan, which, if it had been thoroughly

roughly executed, muſt have effectually kept the Welſh in ſubjection.

Among theſe was Roger de Montgomery, earl of Arundel and Shrewſbury, who took the town and caſtle of Baldwyn, and called it by the name of Montgomery, which it has retained to the preſent time.

Gruffyth ap Conan, who was at this time king of North-Wales, in conjunction with the princes of South-Wales, falling upon the Normans, routed them with great havoc, and deſtroyed their caſtles and two large armies, which William Rufus raiſed againſt them. Gruffydd ap Conan was afterwards compelled by Henry I. to ſubmit to him, and make compenſation for the ravages he had committed in England. In the time of king Stephen, he took advantage of the civil wars then in England, when he and his ſons committed great depradations and ſlaughter on the Normans who were ſettled in Wales. After a reign of fifty years, Gruffydd ap Conan died. He was revered and beloved by his ſubjects, and dignified, on account of his valor and victories,

tories, with the diſtinguiſhing title of the Defence and Shield of Wales.

Upon the death of Gruffydd, his territories were divided between his ſons, according to the cuſtom of Wales, who owed allegiance to the eldeſt, Owen Gwynedd. Owen was the firſt who had the title of prince of North-Wales, before his time they were all called kings. He was a man of a martial, but ſavage diſpoſition. In theſe barbarous times, as in the modern Aſiatic nations, caſtration and loſs of eyes was often the hard fate of ſuch as had the misfortune to be related to the reigning prince. A puniſhment which Owen inflicted on his nephew Cunethe, ſon to his brother Cadwalhon.

He uſed his relations with great injuſtice and cruelty. His brother Cadwalhon he deprived of his eſtates, and forced to fly abroad, and ſeek aſylum with Henry II. At the inſtigation of Cadwalhon, Henry made two or three expeditions into Wales; in which he was generally unſucceſsful, owing to the ſituation

tuation of the country, of which Owen always took advantage.

After Owen Gwynedd's death, his eldeſt ſon, Jorwerth Drwyndwn, i. e. Edward the noſeleſs, was ſet aſide as improper to govern, on account of that defect; and the government devolved to his brother, David ap Owen, who was afterwards dethroned by Llewelyn, ſon to Jorwerth Drwyndwn. Madoc, the youngeſt ſon of Owen Gwynedd, it is ſaid by the Welſh hiſtorians, went abroad and diſcovered the continent of America, that part of it which is called Florida. Upon his making this diſcovery, he returned to Wales, and carried away a colony of his countrymen to make a ſettlement.

This improbable ſtory is univerſally believed among the Welſh at this time; and in confirmation of the truth of it, they ſay, that the Welſh language is ſtill ſpoken among ſome of the Indian tribes, who are the deſcendants of this Madoc ap Owen Gwynedd. Thus do the Welſh arrogate to themſelves the honor

nor of the firſt diſcovery of America, in preference to the great Columbus.

Under the conduct of Llewelyn ap Jorwerth, and his ſon and ſucceſſor, David ap Llewelyn, the Welſh carried on war with various ſucceſs againſt the Engliſh. Defeating them in ſkirmiſhes, and falling upon them unawares in narrow paſſes; and when defeated, flying for refuge to their natural impregnable fortreſſes.

Llewelyn ap Gryffydd ſucceeded his uncle, David ap Llewelyn; and was the laſt prince of Wales of Britiſh blood. He was ſlain unarmed in Buelt-wood, where he had retired to meet ſome lords of the country; and his head was put on the tower of London. Thus were the Welſh at laſt conquered by Edward I. after they had maintained their independence for ſo many centuries.

I have drawn the outlines of the hiſtory of this country, as conciſely as the ſubject would permit. In my next letter, I ſhall give

give ſome account of the means that were uſed to ſecure their ſubjection, and their union with England, which will conclude my obſervations on this country.

I remain, Yours, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XXI.

DEAR SIR,

AFTER the tragical end of prince Llewelyn, the politic kind Edward took every prudent meaſure to ſecure his conqueſt. He granted lands in Wales to his followers, thereby incorporating the Engliſh with his new ſubjects. The woods, which ſerved as faſtneſſes to ſecure and conceal the enemy, he ordered to be deſtroyed; and cauſed ſeveral ſtrong caſtles, which I have before deſcribed, to be built; and garriſoned them to keep the country in ſubjection.

The Welſh having experienced the cruelty and rapaciouſneſs of the Engliſh governors, were

were unwilling to ſubmit to Edward, and called upon him to give them a prince, a native of their country. We are informed by hiſtorians, that for this purpoſe he ſent his queen to Carnarvon-caſtle, where ſhe was delivered of Edward II. who had the title of prince of Wales conferred upon him; thereby complying with the literal import of their requeſt, at the ſame time that he avoided the ſpirit and intention of it.

Notwithſtanding this politic conceſſion, and the more prevailing argument of force, which the Engliſh uſed; many of the Welſh, from the hopes of plunder or antipathy to their conquerors, were ſtill inclined to commit outrages. There were many inſurrections in Wales, after the death of prince Llewelyn, which were ſoon quelled. The moſt conſiderable was that of Owen Glyndowr, who was ſo called from the lordſhip of Glyndowrdy; his real name was Owen ap Gryffydd Vaughan.

The cauſe of this inſurrection was an enmity that ſubſiſted between Owen and Reginald

nald lord Grey of Rhythin, on account of ſome incroachments, which Reginald made on the lordſhip of Glyndowrdy.

Owen, had received his education in the inns of court, and was in great favor with Richard II. When Richard was depoſed, he loſt his eſtate at court; and Reginald lord Grey, preſuming on this, encroached upon his lands. Owen made application to parliament for relief, which proved ineffectual; and when the biſhop of St. Aſaph acquainted the parliament of the danger of irritating the Welſh, they returned this haughty anſwer, Se de illis ſcurris nudipedibus nil curare.

Owen, not meeting with redreſs from the parliament, had recourſe to arms, took Reginald priſoner, and deſtroyed the lordſhip of Rhythin.

This ſucceſs induced many to follow Owen's fortunes, he afterwards gained a compleat victory over lord March and the Herefordſhire men. Lord March was taken priſoner, by Owen, in this battle, and upon application being made to Henry IV. he refuſed

to

to pay his ranſom. Irritated by this, lord March joined with Owen, and they entered into a confederacy with the earls of Northumberland and Worceſter againſt king Henry, and it is ſaid, that they even ſigned deeds to divide the kingdom. Henry had the good fortune to defeat the deſigns of this powerful confederacy, for he attacked them at Shrewſbury, before all their forces were joined, and gained a compleat victory over them. The battle of Huſke afterwards, put an end to Owen's aſpiring hopes and the lives of fifteen hundred Welſhmen, who were killed on the field of battle. This was the laſt ſtruggle, and unſucceſsful effort, made by the Welſh, for the recovery of their liberties. The Engliſh now having entirely ſubjected them, treated them rather as ſlaves than ſubjects. They were prohibited from enjoying any offices, purchaſing any lands, and even penal laws were enacted to prevent the Engliſh from intermarrying with them. Thus did the Engliſh parliament rather widen the breach which ſubſiſted between the two na-

tions, than heal the wounds occaſioned by the late inſurrections.

In the reign of Henry VII. who was deſcended from Owen Tudor of Penmynydd in Angleſea, and from the princes of North-Wales, the Welſh experienced greater favor; and by his ſon and ſucceſſor Henry VIII. the union of England and Wales was happily and politically effected. Thus were united under the ſame laws and ſame government, a people hitherto diſtracted with continual wars and enmity. And it is hoped, by every perſon that underſtands the real intereſt of the principality, and wiſhes to promote it, that every diſtinction between England and Wales, whether ariſing from a difference of manners and cuſtoms, the mode of adminiſtring juſtice, and executing the laws, or even in the language, may be intirely removed.

I have now brought to a concluſion what I originally intended. In my account of the manners, cuſtoms, hiſtory and ſtate of the country, at the ſame time that I omitted no circumſtance that I thought would render the

ſubject

ſubject agreeable, yet my principal view has been to take notice of ſuch things as materially affect its intereſt. However defective and improper the execution of my plan has been, it has the merit of being juſtified by truth, and impartiality, which alone is a ſufficient atonement for its faults.

Adieu, Sir, &c.

FINIS.